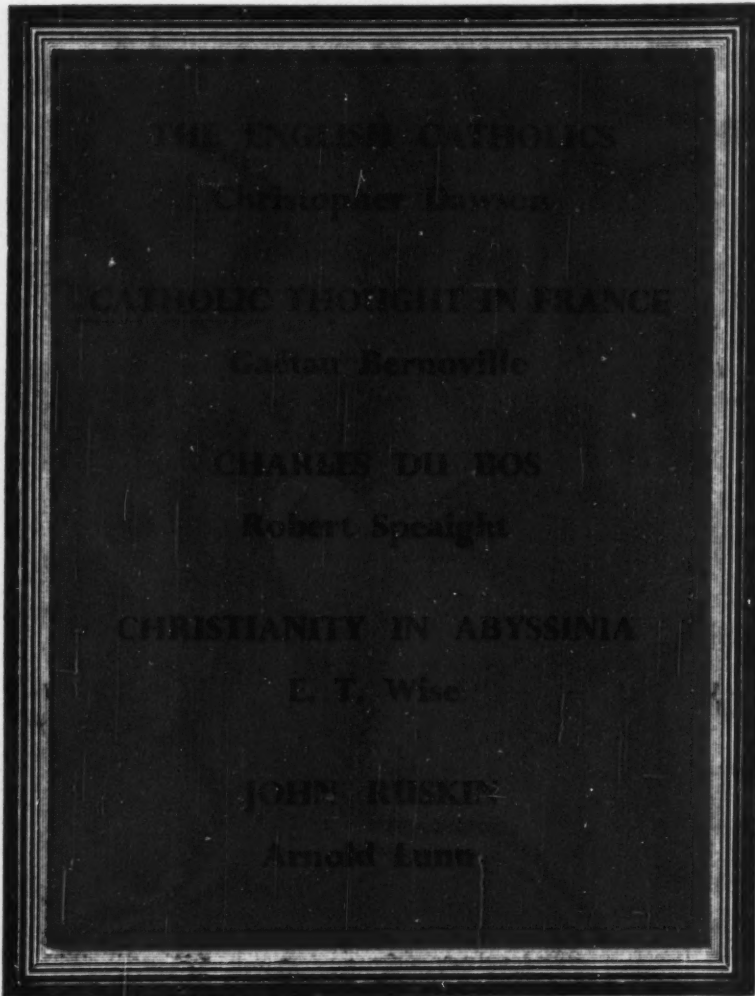


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THE ENGLISH CATHOLICS 1850—1950

By CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

THE celebration of the centenary of the restoration of the hierarchy affords an obvious opportunity for reviewing the progress and achievements of Catholicism in England during the last 100 years and for re-estimating 'the present position of Catholics' in England ninety-nine years after Newman made his famous survey. Nevertheless the task is a very difficult one and it becomes more difficult the nearer we come to our own time. It is only after a considerable period has elapsed that the past becomes historically intelligible. The present can never write its own history. The best that it can do is to collect the raw materials for the historian of the future, and we cannot know beforehand what are the facts which will seem most significant to the future. And if this is true of all history, it is far more true of religious than of political history. For the religious historian has to deal not only with a process of ecclesiastical organization but with a process of spiritual change, and the quantitative methods of modern statistical study can throw but little light on the qualitative changes which determine the religious character of an age.

In spite of these difficulties *The English Catholics, 1850-1950*¹ is by far the most complete survey of modern English Catholicism that has ever appeared. It is not a history, but a collection of detached studies each dealing with some special aspect of the subject with a long historical introduction by Fr. Philip Hughes and a concluding summary which includes a careful review of the statistical evidence by Bishop Beck, the editor. The fifteen authors have maintained throughout a very high standard of objectivity. For it has been their aim not to write 'a conventional panegyric, but an historical meditation upon the past such as might serve to throw light upon the present and, perhaps, offer guidance for the future'. Accordingly the note of self-satisfaction and self-congratu-

¹ Burns Oates & Washbourne. 35s.

lation which is so common in publications of this kind is conspicuously absent. Thus the Editor writes: 'It seems to be generally admitted that the influence of the Catholic community in England on public life is by no means commensurate with its size, and there seems a good case for arguing that, at least until very recent years, this influence has been throughout the greater part of this century steadily declining.' This is not the usual tone of centenary celebrations, and throughout the volume there is no attempt to conceal the failures and imperfections of the past and even of the present.

And yet when we look back over the past century we cannot fail to be impressed by the immense positive achievement of the period under review. The four pillars of the Catholic revival—Wiseman, Newman, Manning and Ullathorne—would have been remarkable in any age and circumstances, but their achievement is doubly remarkable when we consider the tremendous difficulties, internal as well as external, against which they had to contend. And the greatest of all their difficulties has been the lack of social homogeneity which characterized and continues to characterize the English Catholic community. There has perhaps never been an organized religious movement which was so completely lacking in natural sociological unity. It was made up of three completely different elements—the old Catholics, the Irish and the converts—none of which was strong enough to assimilate the rest or to impose its traditions upon them. Emancipation had done little to strengthen the position of the old Catholic element. It had meant the passing of political leadership to O'Connell and the Irish members of Parliament whose methods and ideals were totally antipathetic to the sober and unenterprising traditionalism of the English Catholics. Nor did they have any share in the booming prosperity of the new industrial England. As Archbishop Mathew writes in his chapter on 'Old Catholics and Converts':

It is probable that the old Catholics benefited less than any other section of the community from the new industrial prosperity . . .

Similarly there were few Catholics among the class of new investors. . . . There were whole sections of English life which the Catholic community did not penetrate, the clerical and academic worlds, the new industrialism, the groups from which the Civil Service was then recruited. The great mercantile grouping of the City of London was alien soil to them. . . . At the moment it was the landed interest and that alone which was predominant in the Catholic body.

From this point of view the coming of the converts had a revolutionary effect on the structure of the English Catholic community. For it brought in the upper middle class element which was to be the ruling class in the new Victorian England: not only the leaders of religious thought in the universities but members of families which had long held an important place in Parliament and public life, like the Wilberforces, the Mannings, and the Palmers, and lawyers like Sir George Bowyer, Sergeant Bellasis and James Hope. These men had little in common with the old Catholics and the English clergy. They belonged to a different world and a different age and they were more in sympathy with the Liberal Catholics on the continent, such as Montalembert, Rio and Mrs. Augustus Craven, than with their English fellow Catholics.

There was however one all-important exception, for the head of the new hierarchy proved himself an enthusiastic friend and ally of the converts. But Wiseman belonged neither to the old Catholics nor to the Irish, but to the cosmopolitan world of Rome and the continental Catholic revival. It was the coming of the converts which inspired Wiseman with his vision of the new era and the restoration of England to the faith. It was his vision and enthusiasm that made the restoration of the hierarchy such a landmark in the history of English Catholicism, and it was the alliance of Wiseman and the converts that gave the new Victorian Catholicism its distinctive character. No doubt Wiseman exaggerated the importance of the Oxford conversions and he failed to realize the strength of the reaction which those conversions had produced in the Established Church and in English society. For it was not the restoration of the hierarchy in itself so much as the fear and the sense of insecurity aroused by the Anglo-Catholic movement as a whole which explains the extraordinary outburst of intolerance and fanaticism which followed Wiseman's pastoral of 7 October, 1850.

The Prime Minister put himself at the head of this agitation by his letter to the Bishop of Durham, and forthwith proceeded to take legislative action against the restoration of the hierarchy by introducing the notorious Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

This episode deserves more study than it has received for the political repercussions of the anti-Catholic policy of Lord John Russell's Government was no less important than its religious consequences.

No Catholic historian, so far as I am aware, has ever done justice to the remarkable stand that was made by one political party to the wave of religious intolerance that swept across England in 1850 and 1851.

While the Whigs and the Tories were brought into temporary alliance by their common hatred of Rome, the leaders of the Peelites—Aberdeen and Newcastle in the Lords, and Graham and Gladstone and Sidney Herbert in the Commons—did all in their power to resist the popular clamour, at the cost of considerable personal unpopularity. No doubt in the case of Gladstone his own Puseyite sympathies helped to decide his attitude, but the others, and especially Aberdeen and Graham, felt that a wanton blow had been struck at the policy which had inspired the Act of Emancipation. As Graham wrote to Sidney Herbert:

Lord John sought to catch some fleeting popularity at the expense of the principles of his political life, and in his eagerness to strike a blow at 'Gladstonism' he forgot that the 'superstitious mummetries' which he enumerates are part of the creed of one-half of the British army and of eight million of his fellow subjects. The task of governing this nation is difficult enough without aggravating it by such imprudence. Consolidation of the union with Ireland has been the grand object of the greatest men of the last half century, and it is melancholy to see it defeated by the rashness of a day.¹

But the Peelite attitude found little support in Parliament. Even with the help of the Irish members and a few Radicals like Bright and Roebuck they only succeeded in mustering ninety-five votes against the second reading of the Bill, while in the House of Lords only twelve peers were found to support Aberdeen, and there were even two prominent old Catholics' names—the Duke of Norfolk and Lord Beaumont—among the overwhelming Government majority.

The passage of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill not only outraged Irish opinion: it also produced a far-reaching and unforeseen effect on English foreign policy. For the Peelites were the leading representatives of the policy of European co-operation based on the great settlement of 1815 in which Aberdeen himself had participated, and the unpopularity which they incurred by their pro-Catholic stand helped to make their foreign policy unpopular. The

¹ Stanmore, *Life of Lord Herbert of Lea*, I, 133-4.

anti-papal agitation was itself an acute form of xenophobia and the same spirit found expression in the aggressive insularity and anti-Austrian feeling of Lord John Russell and Palmerston. It is curious to see how in those years the anti-Catholic and anti-Austrian tendencies went hand in hand, so that Lord John even went so far as to declare that the Pope in re-establishing the hierarchy was acting under the instigation of Austria and Russia as the instrument of reactionary policy throughout Europe.

There is no doubt that the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was the prime cause of the isolation of the Peelites from their natural allies both on the Right and Left, and of the failure of the attempts to form a coalition under Aberdeen's leadership in 1851 since both Aberdeen and Graham had made the withdrawal of that measure the condition of their acceptance of office.¹ When the coalition was actually formed in December 1852, it was already too late and Lord Aberdeen was powerless to avert the catastrophe of the war in the Crimea which destroyed his life's work and his ideals of European order. Thus it may be plausibly maintained that the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill prepared the way for the triumph of Lord Palmerston and for the ending of the forty years peace which was the greatest achievement of nineteenth-century statesmanship.

No doubt it will be said that all this would have happened anyhow—that events are not determined by such accidents but by an immanent law of historical necessity. Personally I do not believe it. There is, so to speak, a combustible element in human affairs which is harmless as long as it is left alone, but which may become infinitely destructive if some chance spark sets it ablaze. In this case Lord John Russell kindled the fires of religious intolerance, not out of conviction or because he wished to persecute the Catholics but because, as Lord Granville once said, he was a man who was 'always dying to connect his name with something'. Even the Whigs themselves soon realized that the episode had discredited the Government far more than it had damaged the Catholics. Nevertheless it was by no means such a complete triumph for Wiseman and the Catholics as the writers of the centenary volume suggest. It was a tragedy, and an unnecessary tragedy, that the restoration of the hierarchy should have been accompanied by this violent outburst of popular fanaticism. It could easily have been

¹ Aberdeen wrote to Lord Stanmore: 'I might have been Prime Minister at this moment had it not been for my resistance to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Without doubt this is a most unpopular ground, but I feel quite satisfied that I am right.' Stanmore, *The Earl of Aberdeen*, p. 200.

avoided by a little of the diplomacy which Manning displayed so often in later years when it was much less needed.¹

It is true that when Wiseman realized what had happened he met the situation with admirable coolness and address. But by that time the harm had been done and a breach had taken place which could only be healed by generations of patient work. The late Elie Halévy, in his great history of England in the Nineteenth Century, maintained that in spite of their apparent victory the position of Catholics in Victorian England had been appreciably weakened. 'There can be no doubt,' he writes, 'that for many years after 1850 Protestant Liberalism became increasingly anti-Catholic. Wiseman, who had hitherto been welcomed in London society, saw many doors closed against him. . . .' and he concludes: 'The conversions to Rome at this period were not a ferment leavening the nation, but a self-elimination, a secession, an emigration at home.'²

This alienation of the Catholics from English public opinion was increased during the next two decades by the long controversy that was evoked by the Italian situation and the fall of the Papal states. The enthusiasm of English Liberal opinion for the cause of United Italy as represented by Cavour and Garibaldi was increased by the forces of sectarian bigotry and anti-Catholic prejudice. And once again, as in 1850, it was Lord John Russell who made himself the mouthpiece of English anti-Papal sentiment, together with Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone, whose political evolution during these years was dominated by his pro-Italian and anti-Papal sympathies. The English Catholics were inevitably driven by their loyalty to the Papacy to throw themselves into political controversy and many of the leading figures like Manning and W. G. Ward became the champions of an extreme form of political Ultramontanist similar to that of Veuillot on the continent. But, as Fr. Philip Hughes points out in his introductory chapter, this development not only widened the gulf between English Catholics and English public opinion, it also bred new and bitter divisions among the Catholics themselves. The result was not merely to drive Catholic Liberals like Acton and Simpson into a state of revolt, but to bring any kind of moderation into disrepute and to cause Newman himself to undergo years of isolation and frustration.

¹ Bishop Bernard Ward wrote that 'it is admitted to be the greatest practical mistake that he ever made'. *The Sequel of Catholic Emancipation*, II, 285. He gives the text of Wiseman's Pastoral in an appendix to this volume.

² Halévy, *The Age of Peel and Cobden*, translated by E. I. Watkin, pp. 327, 361.

The antagonism between Manning and Newman which had its source in these disagreements overshadows the whole intellectual history of Victorian Catholicism and manifested itself in more than one direction. It divided the Catholics, and most of all the converts, into two camps, so that their intellectual energies were squandered in a series of bitter and undignified disputes instead of being united in the service of Catholic culture. We see the results of this most of all perhaps in the history of Catholic higher education. As Mr. Evennett shows in his learned and impartial study of Catholics and the Universities, there was much to be said on both sides—for Manning's policy of an English Catholic University which might have formed 'an intellectual coping stone to the achievements of the Second Spring' as well as for the alternative policy of encouraging the entrance of Catholics into the older universities and providing a Catholic centre for them at Oxford. But the division of the Catholic forces—and still more the ill-feeling that accompanied it—prevented either plan from being successful and set back the development of Catholic higher education for a generation. It was a tragedy that the unique ability and prestige of Newman could not have been used in the cause and the environment to which they were best suited. But it is perhaps an even greater tragedy that the cause of this frustration should have been the other great leader of English Catholicism in that age. For Manning was not the arrogant and heartless fanatic of Lytton Strachey's brilliant caricature. He was, it is true, essentially a statesman, with a keen interest in the problem of power and a natural gift for leadership. But he used these gifts in the service of super-political and supernatural ideals. His vision was never confined, like that of so many of the converts, to the tradition of the Oxford Movement and its controversial background. He realized more clearly than any of his contemporaries that the mission of Catholicism transcended denominational limits and that it must embrace the life of the nation as a whole with 'everything that affects human sufferings and the state of the people'.

Unfortunately the condition of English Catholic life in the period that followed 1850 gave no room for the development of these ideas. Manning found himself completely isolated and excluded from public life, and consequently he was driven to throw himself with passionate ardour into the great conflict that was being fought out at Rome and on the continent during these years. It was not until the final stage of his career that he was free to

devote himself to his social and national apostolate in England, and great as was his achievement the time was then too short for it to bear its full fruit. Here again one feels that an opportunity had been lost and that the full possibilities of the great age of the Catholic revival in England were never realized.

But there still remains the third element in the Catholic community—the Irish—and with the passing of the heroic age of the Catholic revival—which was primarily the age of the converts, this third element has steadily gained in weight and influence. The Irish were here before the converts—indeed the origins of the Irish element in England goes back far into the eighteenth century. But the great migration which changed the whole character of the Catholic community in this country belongs to the nineteenth century and above all to the period of the Famine which by an historical accident coincided with the crisis of the Oxford Movement and the coming of the converts.

The importance of this element is fully recognized by the authors of the present volume. There is an entire chapter devoted to the Irish Immigration by Professor Denis Gwynn and it is also dealt with at some length in his further chapter on *The Growth of The Catholic Community*, and by Fr. Philip Hughes in his introductory chapter. Both writers bring out the two complementary but conflicting aspects of this movement. First the rapid increase of the Catholic population which was the material basis of all subsequent Catholic expansion. And on the other hand the immense material and spiritual problems that confronted the Church in England in dealing with this huge floating population of destitute strangers in the land without churches or schools or social services of any kind whatever. In addition to these difficulties the newcomers were divided from the English population—Catholic as well as Protestant—by profound cultural and national antagonisms. The resultant situation was a difficult one for all concerned, and most of all for those who were in a position of responsibility. For the more Catholicism became identified with the Irish population the more it became estranged from English social traditions. Yet the old Catholics, and to some extent the converts also, were English of the English and shared the social and political prejudices of their Protestant fellow-countrymen, so that there was a real danger that the growth of the Irish element would increase the divorce between Catholicism and the English people, while at the same time bring-

ing a new element of division and misunderstanding within the Catholic body itself. Fortunately not a few of the leaders of English Catholicism, like Wiseman himself and Bishop Grant of Southwark, were men of Irish blood and English culture who were able to understand both sides of the problem, while some of the ablest of the converts showed imagination and sympathy in their approach to the Irish question. Manning above all never showed his powers of statesmanship better than by the way in which he combined his intense loyalty to the English tradition with his sympathy for Ireland and his public support of the Irish national cause. He was, however, fully aware of the failure of English Catholicism to assimilate the Irish population in this country and the need for a more positive approach to the problem, as we see in the remarkable memorandum on the Hindrances to the Spread of Catholicism in England which he composed in his last years.

By the law of nature [he wrote], a people grows up into social and civil life on the soil where they are born. By the sin and persecution of England this has never been true of the people of Ireland. They are the most Christian people on the face of the earth. But not the most civilized in Gioberti's sense. Christianity is their civilization, and before God it is the highest, but for the world it is not so. We have a million of people, priests and faithful of Irish blood, faith and civilization in England, and they are not only alienated from our laws and legislature, but would upset the ink-bottle over the Statute Book.¹ So long as this habit of mind lasts, we shall never have a civil priesthood; and so long as our priesthood is not civil, it will be confined to the Sacristy as in France, not by a hostile public opinion, but by our own incapacity to mix in the civil life of the country; and this incapacity has sprung hitherto from hostility, suspicion and fear. A capacity for civil and public action needs, of course, a training and education, but it springs from a love of our country. The Irish have this intensely in Ireland, but can hardly have it as yet for England. Many English Catholics also from religious prejudice are quite as incapable and useless. In truth the whole civil and political life of England is open to us if we knew how to enter and how to bear ourselves. . . . In my forty years in London I have had all manner of proof of what I write.

The dictum of Terence, *Homo sum et humani nihil a me alienum esse puto*, is not repealed by 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' It is quickened, enforced, extended and elevated. Everything therefore that affects the human sufferings and state of the people, it is the duty of every civilized man to note and tend, much more of

¹ He is alluding to an episode in which a young Irishman upset an ink-bottle over the petition to Parliament which he had asked his people to sign.

every Christian man, and above all of every Catholic man and woman, and emphatically of every priest and bishop. We cannot multiply loaves or heal lepers as our Lord did, by which the people were won to follow and learn of Him, but we can be prompt and foremost in working with all who are labouring to relieve every form of human suffering, and sorrow and misery. If we come forward gladly and usefully the people of this country are visibly glad to receive us among them.¹ (17 July, 1890.)

These were the principles which Manning followed in his intervention in the great London Dock strike, an action which was the more important because it was through the Labour Movement and in the Trade Unions that the Irish population first found a basis of common citizenship with the English people. If it had not been for the work of Manning and the tradition he left behind him that Movement might have been a cause of estrangement from the Church, as it was so often on the continent. But in England the social enfranchisement of the workers of Irish origin helped to promote their religious assimilation by English Catholicism. Henceforward this process of assimilation went forward steadily and smoothly and it was accompanied by the rise of a new middle class of mixed Irish and English origin which has gradually tended to take the place of the old Catholic element in the leadership of the Catholic community. The history of this dual process of social evolution has yet to be written, though it is briefly referred to by several writers in this volume. We know very little of the details of the great changes which transformed the way of life of the average Catholic in this country, except in so far as it forms part of the general social evolution of the English people.

On the whole, however, it may be said that though the process of assimilation is still not complete, the three elements out of which the Catholic community has grown are now more completely fused than at any time in the past. Apart from the differences of social tradition between the three main elements, there was in 1850 a wider cultural separation between the educated and the uneducated—between men like Newman and Acton and Ward and the starving illiterate survivors of the Irish famine—than has perhaps ever existed in so small a community. This gap still exists, and there is still no common Catholic culture which is the birthright of every member of the Church. It is the business of the Catholic schools, the Catholic press and the Catholic writers to

¹ Purcell's *Life of Manning*, II, 775-6.

meet this need, but they are all handicapped by the lack of economic resources which has always hampered the development of English Catholicism and which is now accentuated by national impoverishment and by the growing burden of taxation.

Moreover, Catholics are by no means immune from the effects of the increasing secularization of English culture. During the last century the Catholic population has become almost entirely urban. The poverty of the Irish immigrants forced them into the slums of the great industrial and mercantile cities. But the evil effects of these conditions were partially counteracted by their tendency towards group settlement, so that the slum they inhabited was often a Catholic slum, a sort of Ghetto with a religious and social life of its own which provided a natural basis for the organization of missionary and parochial centres. The social changes of the last fifty or sixty years has delivered the Catholic masses from these slum conditions, but at the same time they have destroyed or weakened the community life of the old centres of group settlement. Instead the Catholics have become distributed among the rest of the urban population as a dispersed minority, sharing the standards and ways of life of the majority. In theory this might be regarded as an opportunity for Catholics to leaven the masses among which they are spread. In practice, however, it undoubtedly makes for the secularization of the Catholic minority, since it is obvious that the organs of secular culture, such as the cinema and the secular press, have a greater influence on Catholics than the organs of Catholic culture—Church and school and religious press—can hope to exert on the non-Catholic majority.

The great task of the future is, therefore, to increase the internal coherence and the external activity of the Catholic community as a Christian minority in a secularized mass society. This is the avowed task of Catholic Action which has achieved considerable success on the continent through the development of new techniques such as that of the J.O.C. In this country, however, as Bishop Beck points out, the question of Catholic Action and of the lay apostolate as such has yet to be fully thought out in relation to English conditions. The late Cardinal Hinsley made a serious attempt to deal with this problem by the movement of the Sword of the Spirit which he founded in 1940. But his initiative was conditioned by the special circumstances of the war years, and it came to grief on the issue of Joint Christian Action which has so often proved a stumbling-block in the past. Nevertheless it was a

specifically Catholic attempt to solve the specifically English problem quite in the spirit of Manning's later policy and the sympathy which it aroused among non-Catholics justifies Manning's prediction which I have already referred to.

Thus in spite of the frustrations and disillusionments of the last 100 years the work of the great leaders of the Catholic revival—Wiseman, Newman and Manning—still contains a wealth of unrealized potentialities and is rich in promise and inspiration for the future. The seed of the Second Spring was sown under great difficulties by the wayside, among the thorns and on stony ground, but there was no lack of good soil and the time of harvest is still to come.

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN CATHOLIC THOUGHT IN FRANCE¹

By GAËTAN BERNOVILLE

ANYONE attempting to 'map out' Catholic thought in France at the present time would find that the various 'regions' would merge into each other just when he imagined that he had outlined and fixed them. Everything is in movement, seeking direction, tendencies and evolutions. It can only be a question of indicating the major currents; and that is my present intention.

There is nothing surprising in this effervescence of thought. From the origins of the Christian era, outside of what is constituted in Revelation, in the 'deposit of Faith', of which the Church has charge and which is unchanging, there has always been the problem of the adaptation of Christian thought to the new data thrown up by the progress of knowledge and by the evolution of men's minds, of customs and of the constitution of human societies. In these spheres we are within the vast zones left by the Church to the free investigation of her thinkers, wherein she urges them to work, subject only to her right to warn them if they wander into error—a right which she exercises only at long intervals. Thus research teams and individuals grapple with innumerable problems, at their own risks and on their personal responsibility, without the *magisterium* of the Church being thereby compromised.

Today those problems have assumed such dimensions and caused such a multiplicity of tragic conflicts (some already existing, others imminently threatening), that the whole of human thought, and not merely Catholic thought, is profoundly affected by them. The effect is shown in our contemporary confusion and unbalance. Everything is happening on a global, even cosmic

¹ From *La Revue de Paris*, August 1950.

scale. All that is essential in Man's life and being is under challenge: his liberty, his personality. Every slightest development, political, social or economic, has ideological implications; and the ideologies influence enormous masses to action and mutual opposition. The perspectives opened up by scientific discoveries (and other factors also), which men's minds interpret optimistically or pessimistically, oblige intellectuals to think out afresh the fundamentals of Man's nature and destiny. For some these are the subject for soaring hope; for others, of unthinkable terror, or discouragement, or utter abdication of judgement: and the latter have already systematized their position into sombre philosophies. All this (and I have considered only a small number of the many subjects of speculation) is further complicated by the pervading sense of the sudden irruption and the imminence of the problem.

I should like at this point, before going on to a purely objective study, to raise a preliminary question, simply as a matter of personal opinion. Certain characteristics seem to me to hamper some of the major tendencies of contemporary thought and to limit its intellectual effectiveness wherever they appear. In the situation which I have outlined above, the attitude of thinkers is revolutionary; they make haste, as though to catch up with the course of events and, if possible, to influence it. Such precipitation, whose generosity is not always equalled by ponderation of thought, too frequently ends in a confusion or even a distortion of values and a misunderstanding of their essential hierarchy. In this tendency one notes, first of all, a savage and deliberate break with the past. There is an increasing recession from the living sources of our traditional culture. How can one fail to notice also a certain puerility, a certain ingenuousness, which are to some extent the distinctive traits of revolutionaries, which incline them to think they are innovating in everything; and, above all, an almost panic fear of not appearing to be up to date, of appearing to be reactionaries; and hence an anxiety to jettison *a priori* any modes of thought which are considered traditional, and which are examined less to see whether or not they are valid than whether they are 'contemporary'? The result is a pretty generalized tendency to conform to the fad of the moment, and that attitude does not favour objectiveness and independence in research.

In all this we can easily see an element of partisan passion. Political debates are trespassing excessively into the realm of pure

thought. Political considerations are conditioning speculative thinkers often almost without their realizing it. Over and above this, there is displayed a diffuse romanticism, sometimes curiously spectacular and feverish, and frequently a substitution of the relative to the absolute. These characteristics are aggravated by the tyranny of certain words which have assumed the status of ritual incantations. It is becoming difficult to read a book or an article dealing with ideas which is not riddled with these words, interminably repeated: *message*, *présence*, *témoignage*, and *témoin*, *engagement* and *engagés*, *technique*, *dialectique* and many others which we shall run across, incidentally, in the course of this study. Doubtless they express a new frame of mind; but also, as they outgrow their office as the servants of thought, they end by hypnotizing thought itself, acquiring a mysterious exorcizing significance.

A good proportion of Catholic thought today is marked in varying degrees by these diverse tendencies. In this there is nothing surprising. As it embraces, by definition, the whole of Man, it is never isolated from the generality of thought; it bears the signs thereof, varying with the centuries. It is doubly true today that one of its major (and most salutary) tendencies is to take cognisance of the concrete reality of the modern world and to enter therein resolutely to evangelize it. It seemed to me that I ought to note this at the beginning, in order to forestall the astonishment of readers at certain intellectual attitudes, and also for another reason, which I consider fundamental. I think it will not be possible to formulate a worthwhile verdict on certain contemporary tendencies (I don't say on all of them) except after a vast process of discarding of inessentials and misconceptions: and that will be—and is being done, from within, purging them of adventitious and transitory elements.

Having said that, I will make no further judgements on these trends, but pass on to describing them with the maximum of objectivity of which I am capable.

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More or less everywhere there is a criticism of what is regarded as an insufficiency, a lack of adaptation, a too-narrow view of the world and of humanity, too-rigid formulae in the general economy of Catholic thought, such as it has been generally expressed up till the last few years. It is considered that, as so expressed, Catholic

thought no longer ranges over the whole of human preoccupations, as it ought to do; that it does not sufficiently bring what is eternal into harmony with the temporal, that the beam of its light no longer illumines the vanguard of mankind in its march forward. Hence there is a desire—a determination—to bring it into close relationship with modern Man, his special aspirations and difficulties, his temporal destiny, and even his faith in an earthly happiness, his seeking for a balanced social order from which poverty and the flagrant inequality of social conditions would be banished. Hence too there is a desire to widen the scope of Catholic thought to meet human problems, now on a cosmic scale—not to allow it to remain as an anachronism, an out-of-date solution in the light of scientific discoveries and the perspectives which they open up. Thus the critics seek a Catholic thought which shall no longer be 'of the laboratory' but 'present in the world', 'incarnate'. Its rôle is to maintain contact with all movements of thought, including those which are foreign or even hostile to Catholicism, those which are heterodox or even atheistic; and, far from shutting itself off from them, to seek out common ground of discussion.

It is their attitudes with regard to the traditional system which allows one, I think, to make a valid, though still relative classification of the current tendencies of Catholic thought. In the extreme forms, recourse to traditionalism is reduced, when it does occur, to the minimum expression. This is true of a trend of thought which is strongly influenced not only by the existence of Marxism but also by the multiplicity of hypotheses suggested by different forms of scientific progress.

Among the groups which are most deeply influenced by the first of these factors the most extreme is *Jeunesse et Église*, which is composed of a team of research workers and a review, both under the direction of a Dominican, Fr. Montlucard. The picture which they draw of the situation within the Church is very gloomy. According to Fr. Montlucard, the Church was, at one time in her history, entrusted with a civilizing mission; under her guidance there came into existence a civilization which gave her undeniable support; but the forms of that support have ended by taking a disproportionate place in public opinion, in men's mode of being and of acting, and in forms of government and administration. Evangelization has been paralysed for a very long time now, to such an extent that it may be asked whether those who are Catholics by

birth and tradition have not been so misled by the religious system, which was slowly instituted by a now decadent civilization, that they have now become separated from the spiritual inheritance of Abraham. They have allowed traditions to proliferate: have not the latter usurped the place of the Holy Ghost? And these critics go on to wonder if such a religious régime leaves us able today to announce the free power of Christ, in the name of God and under the inspiration of His Spirit.

Just as the Church has been linked to the traditional culture, so (according to these critics) it has also been linked to the might of the political power, the possessing and ruling classes, and to the anonymous forces of finance. That, they argue, is not a mere historical accident, but an inevitable consequence of what must be recognized as a perversion of the religious rôle. As it has become rich in culture, the Christian world is condemned to please and to find acceptance only among the rich. The poor remain unfed outside the banquet.

Such is the basic thesis of Fr. Montlucard. It is not so very new. It is the staple theme of a certain kind of religious romanticism. This pessimistic view of the Catholic position at this point in history leads to the demand for 'structural reform'. Fr. Montlucard does not omit this. For him it is a question of choosing between a Church which depends heavily on the bases of culture and civilization (and we have seen what he thinks of that alternative) or one whose whole power would be derived from a living faith.

In what sphere does he expect 'structural reform'? We have *discovered* nowadays, he tells us, the possibilities and power of attraction of the Church, of the doctrine of the mystical body, of the personal links of the Christian with Christ, of the unity and spiritual solidarity of Christians and all men in Him, of a sanctity possible to the Christian layman, provided that he be 'present in the world', that is, aware of all the obligations of his condition in life. This, according to Fr. Montlucard, is the balance sheet of twenty years of Catholic revival.

Fr. Montlucard does not tell us, be it carefully noted, that our age has laid greater emphasis than certain others on these doctrines of salvation, but specifically that it has *discovered* them; which indicates sufficiently what value he ascribes to the work of many centuries.

What more? A straw for the 'piety of spiritual exercises' and for the 'spirituality of ghetto-ites'—the 'ghetto-ites' here being

that Catholics who allegedly practise hot-house spirituality, letting the rest of the world go by! Today there have grown up a morality of business, a morality in civic and international affairs, and a spirituality of labour. And thus Fr. Montlucard invites Protestants, unbelievers and even Communists to reply in his review to the question, 'How should we tackle the problem of evangelization outside the Church?' What is the aim of inquiries of this kind? To find a Christian manner of living and thinking—that is, a spirit and a spiritual technique, a more 'communal' Catholicism, a Faith reduced once more to its essentials, a Charity which takes more account of 'participation in society' than of spiritual exercises, a 'style' of life befitting Christian man—in short, to rediscover the true meaning of Christianity, which is much more a social fact than a doctrine.

Jeunesse et Église represents a movement which is neither numerically important nor even influential outside a restricted circle. But it emphasizes a tendency with the same intensity as a strong south wind emphasizes the lines of a landscape. Radically separated from Marxism by the essential element of the Faith, it makes free use of many elements of the Marxist philosophy of History, and its economic and social ideas.

The same is true of the group, also inspired by the Dominicans, *Économie et Humanisme*—though with more nuances, a logomachy which is more regardful of rigorous intellectual presentation, a less obvious element of partisanship. Its review of the same title influences teams which are preoccupied by action as well as by thought—action founded on continuous and bold inquiries by the intelligence. Here the key-ideas are: economics thought out and made real in terms of Man's individuality, his aspirations, his legitimate demands, his needs; and, in addition, the communal organization in which Man is to play his part. Fr. Desroches, one of the leaders of this group, has defined one of its main orientations in his recent book, *Signification du Marxisme*. Those who may be disconcerted by the act of confidence which the book implies in certain fundamentals of Marxism will find a vigorous counterblast to it by one of the staff of *Études*, Fr. Gaston Fressard. Writing as an eminent specialist on the subject, Fr. Fressard, while acknowledging the richness of thought and apostolic generosity shown in the book, points out the danger of it 'especially for young Christians who have neither the counter-balance of a deep theological culture, nor of a concrete mode of communal activity'.

Fr. Fressard opines that 'the thesis of *Signification du Marxisme* can be summed up, and will inevitably be condensed in the minds of its readers into the simple formula: Communism is in the logic of History.'

The 'progressive Christians' also believe in and practise the maximum possible utilization of the ideas of Marx. But the analogy with the previously-mentioned group ends there, for the 'progressive Christians' and their standard-bearer, Fr. Boulrier,¹ have deliberately translated this intellectual standpoint into an effective and very active political collaboration with the Communists, while still claiming to keep intact the domain of their Faith. The condemnation of this attitude by the Church, both in Rome and Paris, is well known. It would appear that thereafter the co-operation would have ceased. That is not the case. The group still exists, perhaps in diminished numbers (I do not know the exact position); but however small it may be and always has been, it still exercises on numerous young intellectuals an influence whose pernicious character has been condemned by the Holy Office and by the late Cardinal Suhard.

The group and the review *Esprit* were—it is sad to write it in the past tense—inspired by the vigorous personality of Emmanuel Mounier. Mounier was always, like Jean Lacroix or Nedoncel, a representative of the 'personalist' tendency, which affirms even in the social and economic fields the primacy of Man's personality. Nevertheless, the influence of Marxism on *Esprit* is undeniable. Therein lies, as I pointed out recently,² a strange paradox. Whatever be the reasons, there does exist a favourable predisposition towards Marxism and the progressive Christians—and *Esprit* has contributed not a little thereto, though Mounier always denied this contention. This stems, it would seem, from the fact that the writers in the Review are very diverse in their mentalities, and are united by a common tendency, not by a doctrine nor even a programme. It is a research team, dealing more with abstractions than concrete programmes, in speculation rather than facts; and that always tends to make their thought appear more revolutionary to the reader than the writers imagined or desired. The

¹ The Abbé Boulrier was provisionally suspended in the exercise of his priestly functions during the Summer of 1949 while he was touring Czechoslovakia as a guest of the Prague Government. The suspension was raised before Archbishop Feltin was nominated to the succession of Cardinal Suhard. The Archbishop placed Fr. Boulrier under interdict in the late Summer of 1950. (Translator's Note.)

² In *La Revue de Paris*, May 1950.

last few numbers of the Review were initiating, seemingly under Mounier's own impulsion, a tendency towards more realism and more circumspection.¹

The theories of evolution impress another section of Catholic thought no less than Marxism. That theme leads us immediately to think of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin. He is one of those personalities who show their strongest characteristics more in their conversation than in their writings. Of lively speech, devoid of reticence or reserves, he dispassionately elaborates theses which overthrow accepted expressions of thought, and throw traditional viewpoints into disarray. He lives among cosmic things with the same gay assurance as others do in their small corner of space and their little sector of everyday concepts. His power of intellectual attraction is great, and his personality is very winning. This—and the brilliant flights of his imagination—explain in great part the influence of his thought. In this scientific thinker there are elements of the poet and the artist, rather as in the case of the famous geologist, Pierre Ternier, who used to become entranced over stratifications of the secondary and tertiary epochs.

In Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's view, Man is still in the period of his infancy, and everything points to a probable evolution towards a super-human state. This movement, which till now has been so slow that one might have considered that humanity had more or less attained its vital equilibrium, but which has recently been enormously accelerated, tends towards the constitution of men in a grouping of highly-developed solidarity, to 'totalization' or, to employ another very significant expression of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin, to a 'scientifico-social agglomeration of Humanity upon itself'. The earth is visibly contracting; radio and aeroplane wipe out space and time; population is increasing at enormous speed in territories which are becoming ever more interdependent. This all indicates a veritable phenomenon of growth, a biological evolution which has now reached a phase when it can be no longer contained. Any effort, whether physical or spiritual, which tried to 'resist' this tendency which is now sweeping us along irrevocably, would be utterly vain. Willy-nilly we have entered an era of intense socialization.

This leads to the central problem. 'Modern Man finds himself suddenly drawn into a vast "unitary" whirlwind, in which the dearly-acquired properities of his most intimate personality seem

¹ M. Mounier has been succeeded as Editor of *Esprit* by M. Albert Beguin.

destined to be annihilated.' In other words, what becomes of the human person in all this? At this point appears Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's optimism. The question as to whether Man must enter this phase is answered in advance, since in any case it is going to happen, whatever Catholics desire. But it mustn't happen 'against us'; therefore we must plunge into the inevitable planetary collectivization, not passively, like a dead leaf carried on the tide, but ardently and with confidence. According to Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's very personal view, 'totalization, by its nature, not only differentiates but even personalizes what it unites'. Providing, he adds at once, that totalization is properly directed, for Man *can* act upon the process. And providing also that such action operates not only on what is reducible to terms of the instinct, but also in the sphere of deliberative consciousness. A union realized through love and in love (this word being understood in the sense of mutual internal affinity), by uniting beings not merely superficially but in their essences, has the physical property not only of differentiating but also of personalizing the elements which it organizes. Thus the 'totalizing process', which may kill us if we do not believe in it, can vivify us if we do accept it.¹

Such a summary résumé can only hope to give an indication of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's line of thought. But it is sufficiently obvious how deeply the Christian conception of Man and his destiny are involved in this. How can they be adapted to this theory? Fr. Teilhard de Chardin has not developed his ideas on this point in the papers he has published up till now. At least we can hazard a conjecture from the following conclusion to one of his articles.

For a Christian (providing his Christology recognizes the collective consummation of an earthly Humanity as an event not merely indifferent or even hostile, but a preliminary condition to the final, 'present'² establishment of the Kingdom of God)—for such a Christian, I say, the final biological success of Man upon the earth is not only a probability but a certitude; since Christ (and in Him, virtually, the World) has already risen. This certitude, however, derived as it is from a 'super-natural' act of Faith, is of the supra-phenomenal order; therefore, in one sense, it still leaves the believer a prey to all the anxieties of Man's condition on the natural plane.

¹ Fr. Teilhard de Chardin's thesis has been fundamentally attacked on scientific and philosophical grounds in *L'Évolution Rédemptrice* du P. Teilhard de Chardin, published by Les Éditions du Cèdre, 13 Rue Mazarine, Paris. (Translator's Note.)

² The French text reads '*parousiaque*' (Fr. T. de Chardin's quotation marks).

It may be possible to discern here a rather curious transposition, on the planetary scale, of that immanence of the divine which a certain school of Christian philosophy at the end of the last century located on the plane of individual Man.

If Fr. Teilhard de Chardin is the most notable and the most radical of the Catholic evolutionists, he is not the only representative of this tendency which is also adorned by Lecomte de Nouy in his own fashion, and also, though with much greater moderation, by Fr. de Saint-Seine, the Editor of *Études*.

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Up to this point the traditional values have been slightly represented, but we now come to a whole galaxy of intellectual groups which combine with a lively desire for modernity and adaptation to modern idiom the deliberate purpose of linking themselves to tradition. Thus we observe that the stream springing from the thought of Blondel is not only perpetuating itself, but is attracting wider allegiances. Last January there was constituted the Association of the *Amis de Maurice Blondel*, and it already numbers five hundred members. It proposes to publish the unpublished works of the philosopher of Aix and re-edit *Action* in the famous text of 1893. Thereby are manifested the power and fecundity of a school of thought as boldly progressive as it is wisely traditional, whose leading spokesmen are Fr. Valensin, Mgr. Mullet and Paul Archambault, in the *Cahiers de la Nouvelle Journée*.

Again, a movement which was admirably begun by Fr. de Moncheuil and Fr. Poucel is developing in the field of religious studies proper, especially theology and exegesis. 'Progressivism' is manifest in several characteristics: in a feeling that, till now, theology has been too narrowly circumscribed in the domain of abstraction and literalism, and exegesis in that of erudition isolated from life; in a determination to re-establish contact between theology and history—temporal, living men. Since theology is the science of the knowledge of God, it ought to be for Man's use—of course, in the light of the Incarnation, which is the taking of humanity into tutelage by the Son of God. Theology is made, not for a few specialists in academic bonnets, but for Man in his temporal and eschatological destinies. It must embrace the various forms of spirituality, ranging from the Exercises of St. Ignatius to the mysticism of St. John of the Cross or St. Teresa, which claim the allegiance of the great families, religious or lay, of Christendom.

Fr. Daniélou has observed this in a remarkable article in *Études*, and also the recourse to tradition which enriches this new orientation. Its favourite themes are drawn from the source-texts of Christianity, at the well-spring of Revelation. Hence the exuberant renewal of studies on the Bible, on the Fathers of the Church, on patristic theology. Scholasticism is not thereby eliminated; but it is only a part of tradition; the desire is simply to grasp the whole of tradition and to 'thaw out' those parts which have become formalized. Finally, innumerable problems have arisen since the epoch of Scholasticism of which those Doctors had no knowledge; theology cannot but interest itself in the tremendous temporal dilemmas which grip man today, unless it denies its *raison d'être*.

In the same spirit, many theological and exegetical publications are now made available to a wide, educated public, without their scientific value being thereby diminished. This is true not only of scholarly popularizations of specialist research work, such as those of men like Daniel-Rops or Gustave Bardy or Pierre Courcelles, which have enjoyed great success, but also of original work undertaken by eminent specialists such as Fr. Feret, O.P., Fr. Daniélou, S.J., or A. Robert. The representative figures of the origins of Christianity and their works are presented for all to read. So we find that the series *Génie du Christianisme* under the general direction of François Mauriac, has already published Origen and is about to publish Tertullian. Another such series is that of *Sources Chrétiennes*. Of course, Fr. de la Grandmaison's *Jésus-Christ*, the series *Verbum Salutis*, the great *Christus*, the works of Fr. Huby and Fr. Sertillanges—not to mention others—had already pointed the way. So too for Biblical publications, the number of which grows at an increasing rate.

One is impressed by the profoundly and exclusively religious character of such work. Divorced from political considerations, it also liberates doctrine from sociological considerations which might make it too vulnerable to humanism, to the detriment of the transcendence of Catholicism. Its constructive nature is none the less impressive. It certainly differs from the old quasi-defunct system of apologetics, whose only method of considering problems was by examining them in a series of objections. In this attitude it emphasizes certain aspects which other contemporary systems soft-pedal. But above all it affirms itself, and therein lies the main fruit of its work. It replaces the older system, not simply

by differing from it, but by substituting a more efficacious method.

In the sphere of philosophy, Christian existentialism (which it would be better to call the Christian philosophy of existence, in order to safeguard it from the deforming tyranny of current intellectual snobbery) originates from similar preoccupations. Kierkegaard is the thoroughly Christian father of the school; Sartre is merely a descendant who has gone to the bad. There are several foreign representatives of this philosophy, of whom Romano Guardini is the best known in France. Gabriel Marcel is the leader of the French school. His philosophy is profoundly religious. It argues, as the conclusion of a penetrating analysis of Man's condition, for a complete dedication of self in a superior order, which, from beginning to end, is the divine order. And it is eminently positive.

Theology, exegesis, philosophy. . . . But elsewhere also there is evidence of a generous effervescence of Catholic thinking. The renewal of liturgical studies and practice, the honour for which must be awarded to Dom Guéranger and to Solesmes Abbey, flows more abundantly than ever from the Benedictine Abbeys—Solesmes, of course, and Maredsous and La-Pierre-qui-Vire, over its faithful adherents. Erudite liturgical studies appear, notably in *Témoignages*, the review of the Benedictines of la-Pierre-qui-Vire, in *Maison-Dieu*, the review of the *Mouvement de Pastorale liturgique*, and in the series *Lex orandi*.

Another strong current is that of Ecumenism. It seeks the *rapprochement* of the various Christian churches and it became widely known before the war at the time of the unsuccessful 'Malines conversations'. Its best-known pioneer in France, Fr. Congar, has expressed his views, notably in his book *Chrétiens Désunis*. Rome, whence no concession in the sphere of doctrine is expected, naturally, is extremely reserved on this subject and, by appropriate directives, enjoins prudence on those who undertake *pourparlers* with ecumenical objectives. The fact remains, nevertheless, that Rome desires and favours the development of a fraternal spirit between the various Churches of which Jesus, the Son of God, is the pole of attraction and the soul, especially in opposition to materialistic atheism. The universalist tendency, in which Catholic thought is expanding to embrace the world, gives to these dialogues a new tone and a real apostolic efficacy.

This same tendency, for the same reasons, reacts against a con-

ception of Christianity which is too exclusively centred on the West and which is linked, even in its missionary work in the Middle and Far East, to specifically Western formulae. Hence there is a whole series of learned studies on the oriental religions and on consequent adaptation of the methods of evangelization, in which one finds the names of Massignon, Monchanin, René Guénon and Jean Hubert, and a series like *La Sphère et la Croix* and others.

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Our lightning survey brings us now to groups whose doctrines are based on the teaching of one of the great Doctors of the Church, St. Thomas, from which, today as in the past, they expect to derive all the essential answers.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., whose commentaries and interpretation of St. Thomas are rigorously faithful, is considered the major representative of contemporary Thomism. His Order ensures that the thought of St. Thomas shall have a continuing influence. Despite the by no means gratuitous reputation of the Dominicans as *avant-gardistes*, it would be extremely erroneous to extend that reputation to all members of the Order—as witness Fr. Sertillanges and Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange himself; and that tendency does not affect the strict theological orthodoxy of the Order. It is, however, justified in other fields, notably politics, sociology and aesthetics. This dual tendency, which is very evident in the Dominican centre of Saint-Maximin which publishes *La Revue Thomiste*, has found its most controversial expression in the person of Fr. Bruckberger, O.P., whose now-defunct review, *Le Cheval de Troie*, is still widely remembered. Another centre of Thomism—*Eaux Vives*—has been established by the Dominicans at Étiolles. It was with this group that Maritain made his reappearance when he returned from America after the war.

Maritain's position, authority and influence are too well known to require commentary. His strong and complex personality, which reveals deep and persistent influences, notably that of Léon Bloy, also displays that duality of a firm, even intransigent doctrinal attitude, in conjunction with a broad welcome towards 'advanced' ideas in politics, sociology and the arts. His special rôle is, I think, not to 'adapt' Thomist doctrine, which he wishes to keep absolutely free of all compromise, but to examine in the light of that doctrine all the avenues which offer themselves to the

curiosity of the human mind, as he did for aesthetics in *Art et Scolastique*, for example. He professed an intellectual sympathy for the *Action Française* before it was condemned by the Church; but that sympathy was tinged with reservations which, gradually becoming more marked, finally developed into the publication of his *Primauté du Spirituel*, where the *Action Française* thesis of *politique d'abord* encountered a determined opposition on the philosophical plane. Of recent years Jacques Maritain has moved markedly towards the position of the Christian Democrats. His doctrinal position has remained unchanged; it has even become stronger, if that were possible, while becoming even richer, as was shown at the *Semaine des Intellectuels Catholiques* in 1949, at which he gave the opening lecture. A leader of a school before the war, he has remained such, and not only by his writings, but also by his talks and teaching among constantly widening groups of disciples, of whom several, like Gustave Thibon, have become masters in their turn.

Etienne Gilson, the historian of mediaeval philosophy, has been led by history itself to elaborate his own system of thought, of which Thomism is the fountain-head. The natural disposition of his mind made him singularly amenable to the main characteristics of the doctrine of St. Thomas. He is a Professor in the *Collège de France*, as is well known; and he, too, has not merely pupils but disciples whose quality can be seen from the names of some of them—Paul Vignaux, Maurice de Gandillac, Fr. Chenu. He is passionately interested in the problems of our time and has written about them. It can hardly be over-emphasized how the Thomism of Maritain and Gilson is aware of, and influenced by, contemporary events.

In *La Pensée Catholique* we come to a strongly traditionalist position which is the rallying-point of a number of writers who are disquieted by numerous modern Catholic tendencies which they consider more than merely adventurous, but even tending to blur the outlines of Truth, to dissolve authentic tradition and render dogma nerveless and diluted. This school barricades itself within the Thomistic doctrine as in a fortress with drawbridge raised. *La Pensée Catholique* is the organ of an uncompromising anti-Liberalism, whose positions, political, social and philosophical, are completely integrated.

On this same ground a group of younger men, rallied round M. Jean Ousset and his review *Verbe*, have taken their stand. The fervour and ardour of their thinking confirm the training value

which the most strictly traditional doctrine retains for a section of intellectual youth.

If, instead of concentrating excessively, as is too commonly done, on Paris, that bottle-neck of France, we extended our inquiry to the provinces, we would find centres of study and publications in which the traditional position is advocated as the only efficacious remedy to the universal falling away of today. This is true of the movement—one might almost call it the School of Angers, which is developing under the shadow of the Catholic Faculties of the West and generally under the inspiration of the professors in these Faculties. One remarkable production of this movement is *La Revue des Cercles d'Études*, founded and directed by Mademoiselle de la Boullaye. It features detailed and penetrating criticisms of contemporary productions, mainly in the field of literature, it is true; but, as is well known, many contemporary literary works, such as those of François Mauriac and Graham Greene, continually treat problems dealing with the nature of man, grace and sin; and these stem directly from Christian thought as such.

Our inquiry in the provinces would bring to light many other groups of high quality, many personalities of the highest worth, for whom tradition is not merely a deep arm-chair in which to drowse, but rather a spring-board whence to leap boldly. The name of Gustave Thibon has been mentioned as one such. Another obvious example is Jean Guitton, a humanist and philosopher, who has already published seven of a projected twelve-volume history of *La Pensée Moderne et le Catholicisme*. With men such as these, the provinces continue to exercise their unpublicized influence. If they are outside the centre, Paris, where their thought would have even more influence and could establish schools of disciples, they probably gain thereby in ponderation and serenity.

But even in the heart of busy Paris there are similar wise minds who carefully distinguish between the immutable principles of things which brook no compromise and those conjectures which are subject to the vicissitudes of our time. The name of Mgr. Calvet springs to mind in this connexion. Many thinkers nourish and fortify their own minds by communicating with his thought. True, his fame is essentially as a great man of letters, a Christian humanist, and not as a philosopher or theologian; but as he studies Pascal or Jansenism, for example, he illumines them in his

sober fashion with comments which reveal their relevance to contemporary problems. His influence can scarcely be better summarized than as showing a wonderfully soothing dominance of judgement and good sense.

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All this intellectual effort, in its many manifestations, shows its influence far beyond the confines of specialists and initiates. That influence is shown first and foremost in the Reviews. There are the Jesuit *Études* which, while it is receptive towards new trends, has taken up a very firm attitude in countering movements like Marxism or the 'progressive Christians', and towards certain views of the Review *Esprit*. Again there is the Dominican review *La Vie Intellectuelle* which might be charted, in respect of political 'progressivism', very much to the left of *Études* and slightly to the Right of *Économie et Humanisme*. Others are *Témoignages*, which deals not only with liturgical questions but treats all aspects of religious thought; the *Études Carmelitaines*, which is pre-occupied especially with religious psychology, problems of the contemplative and mystical life in their special relationship with the soul of modern man; *Esprit*, *Jeunesse de l'Église* and *La Pensée Catholique*, whose respective tendencies have already been described; *Dieu Vivant*, which is concerned mainly with eschatological themes, the transcendence of religion and its essential sanctity; *La Revue Thomiste* of the Dominicans of Saint-Maximin. And even then we have only mentioned the most characteristic reviews. Finally there are the publications dealing with psychoanalysis and biological and medical problems in their relationships to Christian morality; in these great fields we find reviews like *Psyché* and the *Cahiers Laënnec*.

Lectures and debates, both public and private, are other valuable methods of extending the influence of Catholic thought. The *Centre Catholique des Intellectuels Français* exists for the express purpose of organizing these. It is a centre for work in common and for the exchange of ideas, whose special aim is to introduce the 'communal' spirit into the world of Catholic thought. Research teams investigate the fields of theology, philosophy, law and politics. The leaders are men of great worth. The C.C.I.F. is primarily a forum open, at any rate in principle, to all trends, so that they may meet and challenge each other in frank and cordial discussions. Some are 'in secret session', among specialists in the

subjects under discussion; others are held publicly in the lecture-hall of Saint-Séverin. The C.C.I.F. has also renewed the tradition, which I and some friends inaugurated between the wars, of the *Semaine des Écrivains Catholiques*. Now widened in scope to include scientists and all other intellectuals, it enjoys great success in its new form as the *Semaine des Intellectuels Catholiques*. Of course, this very success limits its value for the exchange of information. Certain frank expressions of opinion are not possible in the presence of 1500 or 2000 people who, however distinguished they may be, are not initiated to the complexities of the subjects being discussed and the adventurous forms of solutions which occur to some individuals or some groups of specialists. Hence the points of agreement appear more clearly than the divergencies.

How does Catholic youth in the Universities react to the various tendencies which claim its attention from every quarter? On this point one of the best observation-posts is the *Centre Richelieu* which, in the very heart of the *Quartier Latin*, brings together the Catholic students of the Sorbonne, under the aegis of Fr. Charles. The work which is done there throws significant light on the mentality of these young men in the purely religious domain. It embraces not only an intense sacramental and liturgical life, but also lectures and courses which deal with all the subjects, even the most controversial, of Catholic thought, both in itself and considered in its relationship with the modern world. If, in their *élite*, they are perhaps more aware than ever before of the profound demands of the religious life, a great number of them are influenced, more or less consciously, by contact with their Marxist companions of the Sorbonne. Such contacts, sometimes established with the purpose of moral conquest or apostolate, are transformed fairly easily into an intellectual flirtation in which the power of attraction does not come from the Catholic side. That is the most common danger. The much-advertised 'logic of history', interpreted from the Marxist standpoint, impresses many Catholic students, who apparently conclude that the world is heading inevitably towards Marxism, whether that conclusion be pleasing or otherwise. The appetite for revolution and absolute values which is widespread among young people, is catered for by this theory. The students imagine that there is basically only one important debate—that which pits the Communists and Catholics against each other in the modern world. Alternately affected by the attraction of Marxism and the repulsion which their

Catholic conscience experiences towards materialistic atheism, certain Science students find in the biologico-sociological ideas of Fr. Teilhard de Chardin a counter-thesis which delights them.

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This is indeed a prodigious effervescence, peculiar to France, which is beheld with astonishment and disquiet by Catholics in neighbouring countries and overseas. It denotes vitality and richness, but also disequilibrium and disorientation. It gives ground for the most hopeful and the most risky possibilities at one and the same time. The stakes are not merely accessory elements, but essentials. Will those essentials be saved or lost, in the final reckoning?

Those who wish urgently that the Church should intervene in its supreme *magisterium* to unravel the tangle, point the true way, or erect barriers, do not realize what trust she accords to Christian intellectual workers in their labours, and the hopes he bases on their free researches. Cardinal Suhard, addressing them in his famous Pastoral Letter *Essor ou Déclin de l'Église?* said:

Your work is independent. . . . Your task, Christian thinkers, is not to follow, but to precede. It may have been a statement of fact that our thinkers used to lag in the march of thought; but it is not a virtue . . . You will assemble the conclusions of your various special studies to try to reach a cosmic vision of the Universe . . . Your loyalty will be unequalled except by your open-mindedness and your effective co-operation with those who pursue Truth with their whole soul, be they believers or unbelievers.

The Church remains nonetheless vigilant in what concerns the integrity of the Faith. We know the decisions which have been taken in respect of the 'progressive Christian'. Catholic thinkers have thus been warned of the limits set upon certain attempts at conciliation. In another sphere the Pastoral of Cardinal Suhard, *Le Sens de Dieu* (1949), pointed out some dangerous deviations in the present trends of Catholic thought, such as a toning-down of dogma, a tendency to over-emphasize awareness of the needs of Man at the expense of awareness of God; a certain tendency to anthropocentrism; a tendency to eliminate silence, mystery, essential elements such as contemplation and prayer; to consider sanctity as merely a fine form of humanism, a flowering of the personality; a tendency to condemn, as a means of avoiding for-

malism, all spiritual discipline and all asceticism, on the plea that love covers all and suffices for everything. In *Essor ou Déclin de l'Église?* Cardinal Suhard also condemned at one and the same time belligerent 'progressivism' and excessive traditionalism.

It is probably along the lines of that middle course that the process of discarding of inessentials and misconceptions, of which I spoke at the beginning of this study, will take place. The beginnings of that process are already becoming evident. To take only two examples, both chosen from the Jesuits, I will quote Fr. Fressard and Fr. Daniélou. Neither can be accused of inflexibly maintaining out-of-date positions. The modernity of the philosophical thought of the first is well known. The second has produced bold speculations in many fields. Now it is thanks to the dialectical skill of Fr. Fressard, based on his deep knowledge of Marxism, that we owe the most efficacious counter-offensive against infiltrations of Marxist theses into Catholic intellectualism. As for Fr. Daniélou, who is so well equipped to play for younger generations the rôle which was assumed for former ones by such eminent counsellors as Fr. de Grandmaison or Fr. Sertillanges, he seems to me to be becoming more and more concerned to establish a proper scale of values. In fact, speaking to the young audiences of the *Conférences Saint-Michel*, he said in substance: the traditionalists run the risk of confusing the permanent elements of History with their transitory forms; the revolutionaries, for their part, show awareness only of the changing elements in the world: their position is true in that human society is constantly changing; but they submit everything to the criterion of this evolution, and thus sacrifice essential values. . . .

Thus there is taking shape, amidst the many trends which diversify Catholic thought, an invaluable labour of distinguishing between the permanent and the ephemeral, the essential and the accessory, the things which must remain and those which are transitory—the touchstone being not to mistake generosity of mind, however apostolic and admirable it may be in itself, for a sure criterion of intellectual value, nor intransigent resistance to change in every sphere for the true attitude and a guarantee of permanence. 'Let us work at thinking accurately,' said Pascal, adding, 'therein is the foundation of morality'. In the sense in which Pascal understood morality, the dictum is true for every aspect of Man's being.

KARL KRAUS AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE MODERN GNOSTICS

By BÉLA MENCZER

Language is a cross . . . Most men wear it on their breasts. I bear it on my back.—KARL KRAUS.

The historian cannot choose his villains like the poet, nor invent them. At a particular time they are given. Given by a higher power.—THEODOR HAECKER.

MODERN man is deprived of his imagination. He lives outside a world which he ought to be able to feel, to believe in and to imagine: he lives in a black magic of print and reproduction. His very power, which seems to be almighty, renders him powerless; the anonymous dead voice speaking ceaselessly in his name renders him speechless; the anonymous will, claiming to be his will, deprives him of the faculty of willing; the inflation of facts deprives him of any possibility of surprise. Every spontaneous human relation to reality vanishes from the world. The perfect organization of life means a transformation of life into the appearances of death, and finally into death itself.

The supreme tragedy of modern man was first realized in Germany, the first country in which modern organization—in appearance so perfect—ended in the defeat of man, in national disintegration, in the extinction of the state, and in a lawless anarchy of the instincts which at first showed all the marks of a highly efficient order and then sank into nothingness, into physical, moral and spiritual ruin, to the accompaniment of synchronized noise and claptrap.

As yet, one German author only can help the English reader to understand fully the extent and the depth of the German tragedy, which is part of our European tragedy—Theodor Haecker, in his *Journal in the Night*. Here we have the voice of undefeated human faith and the first proclamation of the defeat of the human automaton.

Haecker's unique and spontaneous thought marks perhaps the first step towards a possible new literary style for the post-technical age, if we are to know any such age, after the collapse of the ideal of the human automaton, and if facile reproduction does not, literally, in the physical sense, kill the creative faculty of men. Yet Haecker had a master, whom he often quotes—Karl Kraus. He was a master whom few people in the German-speaking world of the early twentieth century understood, whom few loved for the right reason and whom none feared or hated for any adequate reason, among the many who feared his polemical sharpness and hated the satirical wit of his pen.

It is almost impossible to range Karl Kraus into any known category of German writers. He stood aloof from the German literature of his time. The secret of his influence lay in his firm refusal to belong to it, just as his importance today lies in the fact that he survived it. In Karl Kraus we still recall a champion of the Absolute. The eclectic aestheticism of Hermann Bahr which, round about 1900, ushered in the ornamental window-dressing of European intellectual life in Vienna, led to nothing but empty commonplaces about culture and a prolific commercialism. This latter was a pretentious mixture. It consisted of a psychoanalytical 'unmasking' of every high aspiration and all genuine poetry, combined with a compilation of references and research work amassed by others—Emil Ludwig and Stephan Zweig being the leading 'psychologists' in this industry. The hothouse poetry of Hugo von Hoffmanstahl at the turn of the century was avowedly decadent; so also was that of Rainer-Maria Rilke, even at its best. Not only have its ivory towers collapsed since they wrote, but we are astonished now that anyone could ever have taken the imitation white stuff for ivory. The haughty gnostics grouped around Stefan George pretended to write for a few initiates only in the strange vocabulary of a religious mythology of their own, which was unknown to the vulgar and which combined Zarathustra, Buddha and Apollo with some blasphemous praise of Christ. They ended in a worse than Nietzschean madness: the more massive crooks of Nazism quickly swallowed up those refined illuminati of a 'Divinity' which allegedly manifested itself 'in the strength of the community'.

Better known, though perhaps even less worthy of sympathy, is the fate of another sect of the time, which grew immensely in numbers for a generation after 1918, and now fills the universe

with its self-pity over the self-erected false 'God' that failed. Their gnosis was derived from more rational sciences, but at the same time it was less subtle, more rudimentary and more fit for mass consumption than that of the Nietzsche-imitators grouped round Stefan George. These were the people who unmasked every thought as the sexual desire of possession, or as the striving for economic power; like the Gnostics of old, they decried God as an ignorant tyrant who had given the wrong law to mankind. They planned a dictatorship of the enlightened few, who could emancipate the masses from the prejudices of an unscientific Creation. Then they shed abundant tears over themselves, when the dictatorship which they had prepared over the masses (for whom they always felt a secret contempt, but in whose name they meant to rule) fell into the hands of people who were less pure, less initiated and less elect than they claimed to be.

Finally there were, in the German-speaking world before 1914, the pedantic, painstaking and not very imaginative imitators of French models, themselves somewhat dubious: the novelists of psychology and social analysis, possessing little originality, of whom the brothers Mann, Thomas and Heinrich, are the most memorable. Vienna contributed much less than Berlin to this section of German letters; it was a school of practically unredeemed gravity and affectation. The esoteric pose, scientific pretension, eclectic banalities on European culture were all present. From the perspective of today, the results this school achieved are poor indeed. At their best, those who survive it lament a confessedly degenerate and decadent bygone world of outmoded aesthetic forms, for which they feel all the nostalgia of sterile old age. At their worst, they reveal the solemn gravity of a banal humanitarianism, which knows no note of a personal passion for truth or for real human or spiritual experience, and which sometimes does not even bear any formal sign of talent.

The atmosphere of the bygone Liberal age was responsible for this rhetoric. The tolerance of the time was more often than not another name for indifference to the truth. The freedom of thought for which literary men had clamoured in the decades preceding the Liberal era had come, only to prove that they had few thoughts and that the conquered freedom soon degenerated into the universal commercialization of ideas. Although conflicting in content, these ideas were all good enough to sell for the mass-consumption of the intelligentsia. The age of the masses had

come. Outwardly the Christian Monarchy still presided over the state; the Church and the army still maintained the external decorum of a monarchical society, while an aristocracy still determined much of the external forms of social life. All this, however, was but a baroque, fairy-like superstructure of appearances and fading memories, at best an inadequate counter-balance to the universal corruption and demagoguery. After the accession of Wilhelm II in Germany, even the voice from the throne became that of nationalist demagoguery, often enough raised in praise of Mammon.

Yet, having no suspicion of the series of terrible retributions which have since befallen it, the intelligentsia ruled the scene in Germany and even in Austria, where the Catholic counterpoise was on occasion slightly more weighty, but which gradually ceded its terrain—passively and invisibly—to the new powers that had arisen in Germany. This German intelligentsia, mass-produced by the universities and by the rapidly acquired commercial fortunes of Wilhelm II's age of prosperity, did not struggle for political power, like the French bourgeoisie; neither did they create institutions and a new political technique as the English middle-classes, engaged in a similar struggle, had done. The Parliaments and constitutions which German monarchies and governments had unwillingly granted were as empty and lifeless a framework as these monarchies and governments became in the last phase of their existence.

The intelligentsia wanted, above all, ideas and ideologies, and ideologies came forth from every quarter to attract them. A truly great dramatist, such as Gerhard Hauptmann, debased himself to the level of an ideologist and demagogue in order to placate the intelligentsia. University dons (scientists, as well as historians and philosophers) established their positions by ideological leadership—ranging from abstruse esoterics to coarse nationalist demagoguery. The Kaiser himself prized his position as the leading ideologist of the intelligentsia more than his rôle as a Lord of War.

In this age of facile ornament, of mannerisms, of self-righteous aesthetic complacency, in this German Byzantium and German Alexandria of the early twentieth century, Karl Kraus was the only one who raised his voice in intransigent sincerity, in spontaneous charity towards the humble sufferers of an age of *hubris*. His was the only voice which boldly condemned all the artificiality, the pretension and the complacency of the self-appointed intellectual leaders.

His rôle was somewhat similar to that of Péguy in the same generation in France, but he was even more isolated among his countrymen than Péguy. Still, we can say of Karl Kraus what Romain Rolland said of Péguy in his last book: after him, everything written by anybody else seemed 'mere literature'.

Péguy was proudly and passionately French in every line he wrote and in every gesture of his life, up to the crowning one of death on the battlefield. Kraus, passionately fond of the German language, could not reconcile himself to those who spoke it, and whose speech gave him a haunting feeling that the language of Goethe was as dead as that of Vergil or Homer. Péguy loved Paris passionately; Kraus felt Vienna to be an intolerable burden and at best he liked this town for the simple reason that it was not Berlin: 'though the water of the Danube,' he once wrote, 'is not quite blue, more filth flows down the Spree.' Péguy found relief in the old French military ideal. Already before 1914, Kraus thought that war in the twentieth century would be only the continuation 'by other means' of an ignominious peace; he thought the ideal of war irrevocably dishonoured by its reduction to a 'techno-romantic adventure' of murderous, mechanical accident, and by the ready-made and false enthusiasms which an organized Press propaganda put at its service. His sensitiveness to human suffering, often overstressed to the point of sentimentality, although it was always spontaneous and sincere, made him hate modern war, more especially, as we shall see later, the German concept of war.

Péguy, near enough by his peasant origins to the living symbols of religion, clarified his religious position fully and completely and found in his poetry an unforgettable expression for his faith. Kraus, more melancholy and solitary by nature, never reached full conversion, though in his early writings he reiterates often enough that he thinks the Catholic Church the last refuge of spiritual values in a decaying world, and although he wrote in an essay in the *Fackel* one of the most eloquent and penetrating defences of Christian morality against the aesthetic amorality of the author of *Zarathustra* and of the belated Nietzscheans. Not primarily a lyrical poet, Kraus's temperament was however lyrical. His thought is always inspired by the immediate, the concrete and the living personal experience. Abstract concepts, or systems such as Bergson's metaphysics, which for a time appealed so strongly to Péguy, indeed any systematic philosophy, theology or sociology, remained permanently outside his province, notwithstanding the

fact that for some years in middle life he felt the attraction of a Socialist and revolutionary vision and mystique.

For thirty-seven years, from 1899 to his death in 1936 (which, like the day of his birth, coincided almost exactly with G. K. Chesterton's¹), he edited the Vienna review *Die Fackel* (The Torch), writing it alone from 1911 onwards. This one-man review was the most irregular of periodicals. Some numbers comprised 600-odd pages, others ten or twenty. The subscriber was promised 'at least four numbers a year', but in some years it happened that he received a number every month, or even twice a month. A few advertisements appeared on the red cover during the first few years. Later on, they disappeared altogether, to avoid any possible suspicion that an advertiser could influence the policy of *Die Fackel*; the advertisements were replaced by the following note: 'The sending of any communication whatsoever is not solicited. No reply will be sent, even if stamps are included. Review copies of books will be sold and the proceeds given to charities.' This editorial discouragement did not however discourage fools or mockers, embarrassing admirers or people with a heavy heart who sought an understanding friend in Kraus. Despite his determination to the contrary, Kraus often reacted publicly to the most varied and perhaps the most voluminous correspondence any editor has ever had.

The most important contents in *Die Fackel* were from time to time collected in book form and published as *Statements and Contradictions*, *The Chinese Wall*, *Pro Domo et Mundo* (aphorisms mostly on Austria and Germany), *Morality and Criminality* (notes, comments and aphorisms on court cases), *The Decay of the World through Black Magic* (1914—notes and articles on the Press on the eve of the First World War), *Judgement Day* ('Weltgericht', comments on the First World War written during 1914-18), *In the Night* ('Nachts', 1924, aphoristic fragments on war and the post-war period). The lyric poetry of Kraus is collected in eight somewhat thin volumes under the title *Worte in Versen*. He wrote comedies: *Literature* (1921), *The Unconquerable* ('Die Unüberwindlichen', 1929), a poetic play *The Stage of Dreams* (*Traumtheater*, 1922); a monumental tragedy, *The Last Days of Mankind* (1923), composed of hundreds of scenes and an epilogue in verse, about the First World War.

¹ One of the most successful appreciations of Karl Kraus that we have come across is an obituary essay by Aurel Kolnai, Professor at Laval University, Quebec, in the July 1936 number of the Hungarian review *Századunk* (Our Century): 'The two magicians of common-sense; Karl Kraus and G. K. Chesterton.'

Death interrupted him when he was engaged in a readaptation to the German stage, according to his own ideas, of the complete plays of Shakespeare (partly in improved translation), the first few volumes of which appeared, as well as a new translation he made of Shakespeare's sonnets (from bad German, not from the English!)¹

Besides writing *Die Fackel* for all those years, Kraus lectured several times a year in Vienna, Berlin, Prague, Zurich, sometimes in Budapest before 1918, and several times in Paris in the 1920s and, since the invention of the wireless, over various Radio systems. What a 'lecture' by Karl Kraus meant, nobody who listened to him can ever forget. He was as accomplished a master of the spoken word as he was of the written one. Sometimes he would read his own poetry or prose, while on other evenings he could perform a whole play of Shakespeare or Goethe singlehanded, leaving listeners who, like the present writer, saw hundreds of performances on the stage with the impression that neither Shakespeare nor Goethe can be fully understood unless one has heard them read by Karl Kraus. At other times, accompanied by a pianist only, he was able to perform a whole operetta of Offenbach by picking out the tunes, adding here and there to the text a topical couplet or two; or else a complete comedy of Nestroy in the Viennese dialect; or a complete play in verse by the nineteenth-century Austrian actor-poet Ferdinand Raimund; or *The Weavers* of Gerhard Hauptmann (one of the enthusiasms of his youth, to whom he remained attached in later years, although he had no patience with Hauptmann's later writing and the rôle his former idol played in German intellectual life), and finally perhaps Gogol's *The Inspector* (a favourite piece in his repertoire). On an average, Kraus would be recalled twenty or thirty times by the unceasing applause on these evenings.

A short, somewhat grotesque figure (unkindly and exaggeratedly described as hunchback) would have limited him to but few rôles on the real stage; the fine, spiritual gaze of the eyes, however, behind the thick glasses, the high forehead, the somewhat priestly, even monastic, expression of the face, denoting intense intellectual concentration, crowned by hair which was abundant even in middle age, could only attract when he spoke. Perhaps it was on account of this too characteristic face and a body which

¹ Made by Stefan George, precursor of Nazism, and after his death the favourite poet of the Nazis.

was only suitable for grotesque rôles that Kraus abandoned the vocation of acting, for which he had such unusual gifts.

These gifts were, indeed, of an unusual kind. He used to create a part for himself in his plays which he played himself—few others indeed could have played it.

Kraus was always personal, whether he was writing or acting. His comedy and his drama were autobiographical, so was almost every line of *Die Fackel*. Much of his writing is practically untranslatable: on almost every page there is a pun which does not exist in any other language,¹ through an apparently fortuitous association of words or sounds so that when the aphorism comes the surprised reader discovers that the association is not so fortuitous after all.

Sometimes Latin renders Kraus more approachable to non-German readers. One simple Latin phrase for example sums up the world after 1919. He sees its hopelessness, despite victory over the greater evil—for during the years 1914–18 he thought Prussian Germany to be the greater evil, for reasons which were neither shared nor understood by his countrymen—*Vae victoribus!* he exclaims, when he sees the victors browbeaten by their own victory.

Apart from the linguistic difficulty which makes Kraus practically untranslatable—he thought translations present a body without a skin, not simply a body without clothes, which could be bought anywhere across the frontiers—even the reader who knows German must be familiar with hundreds of allusions in order to follow his thought. A 'mining dog' for instance is an animal unknown to zoology. Readers of *Die Fackel* however always remembered that in 1908 a devoted engineer friend of Kraus composed, with his personal assistance, a story about dogs who were employed by geological research workers to divine earthquakes in distant continents, and that this barking nonsense (to coin a Krausian phrase in English) appeared in Vienna's *Die Neue Freie Presse*, for Kraus deliberately sent it in, wanting to prove his assertion that any piece of stupidity would appear in the 'foremost intellectual daily', provided it bore a signature with a *von* in the name, followed (or rather, in the German way, preceded) by various scientific letters and an address in one of the snobbish quarters of Vienna.

¹ For those readers who are familiar with German; he wants to impose *die Einführung der Unterleibeigenschaft* on psychoanalysts. Another time, he sees *Fortschritt auf Zinsfuß und Prothese* in the First World War.

People who were not readers of *Die Fackel* may not know what 'translations from desperanto' were—it meant the retranslation by Karl Kraus into proper German of the affected, artificial and pretentious style of the Berlin journalist Maximilian Harden, once so famous in Wilhelm II's time. Some of Kraus' aversions and polemics recur in allusions which it is impossible to forget. For example one of his most violent campaigns was directed against a once famous Berlin writer, who was extremely bellicose in 1914, but became an advocate of francophilia and pacifism in the 1920s. The dramatic moment of the battle came when Karl Kraus made a public offer in a lecture in Berlin to cease his campaign, provided his opponent made a foundation, out of the money earned by his recent highly successful pacifist books, of some thousand marks for soldiers blinded in the war, blinded literally and also metaphorically, by the enthusiasm his no less successful bellicose writings excited in 1914—an offer which was never answered.

Kraus' appreciations were not easy to forget—and for some people not easy to forgive. Psychoanalysts are 'the scum even of this mankind'. The Press in general, allowing for a few individual exceptions (who mostly belonged to the Swiss-German Press), is *die Journaille*; Bernard Shaw is 'a fool not witty enough to be admitted as such to the court of the most minor Shakespearian King'. Marxists, Social-Democrats, Communists and Trotzkyites 'are always right, although on the lowest level of thought and expression, in their descriptions of each other'. Neither were admirers or followers safe from his vitriolic pen: 'My whole object throughout all these years has been to discourage them from writing. Instead of this, I have taught them how to write.' He defines his own rôle in the literature of his time thus: 'I have the gift of Midas. Not only as soon as I touch a newspaper or periodical, but even before I have done so, it has become muck . . .' He is chiefly known to the vulgar by what he does not do . . . 'Show any big clock to a Viennese . . . He will be convinced that it is the clock from the tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral, stolen by the Fackel—Kraus . . .!' He meets a man staring at him in a train and firmly resolves that he will have nothing to do with him. Yet the inevitable question comes: 'Excuse me, sir, are you not Karl Kraus?' 'No!' he answers energetically and removes himself rapidly to another compartment. 'And the fool still believes that he met me!'—and he was right, for everyone but the real Kraus would have enjoyed this sort of popularity.

Die Fackel was an autobiography composed month after month and year after year of little incidents and comments of this kind. Yet in order to come to a true conclusion everything essential in Kraus ought to be read more than once. He was right to insist that authors should always be read twice: the good authors are more profound on second reading, while the bad ones can be unmasked as shallow and pretentious on second reading only. A vitriolic genius? Certainly, but we must also remember that Karl Kraus was at the same time a mystical genius of the highest lyrical sensibility, whose heart was filled with compassion for both human and animal suffering, and who was, so to speak, a Franciscan lover of all who were humiliated, wounded and oppressed. Not only did he regularly give the proceeds from his lecturing performances to charities, but he wrote his most moving and tender pages on suffering children, on the hunger, the misery and the devastation caused by war; for over thirty years, in unforgettable verses, he saluted the memory of the great passion of his youth, the actress Annie Kalmár, who died in 1901 in the flower of her youth. Love and women played a great part, if not the chief part, in his life and work, as they do in the thought of every male temperament; yet, characteristically enough, his readers had to guess on this point, as only the one woman, who preceded him to the grave by thirty-five years, ever appeared by name in his poetry.

'Women cannot be sufficiently over-estimated' is a favourite aphorism of this passionate anti-feminist, of this fierce enemy of psychoanalysis, which he calls 'an illness of which it is claimed to be the cure'. Having no patience with pretension, with any falsification of nature, with the debasement of spontaneity by any system of mental mechanization, he had perhaps the least patience of all with any interference in the sacred natural domain of love. Nothing seemed more decadent to him in this modern age, and a greater offence against Creation, than the rationalization of erotics by a so-called science, or the negation of the feminine principle in modern life. Not that Kraus idealized women, or visualized them as pure and angelic, like Dante's Beatrice. Quite to the contrary. The woman to whom he paid tribute was 'panther-like, dangerous in her nightly escapades, but much less so in the daytime'. When the unfortunate young Viennese philosopher Otto Weininger published—shortly before the culmination of his thought in suicide—his *Sex and Character*, in which he describes women as naturally immoral, irrational creatures of instinct,

hostile to the spiritual and intellectual strivings of men, Kraus congratulated him, writing that 'a passionate devotee of women could not agree with you more'. Of all contemporary dramatists and poets, he most admired August Strindberg, this tortured, arch-enemy of the feminine. What Kraus saw in women was strictly of a metaphysical, and above all of a biblical, order. He saw woman as the temptation. For him, the feminine was the proof of divine creation, a principle of temptation that was put in man's path. The negation of the feminine principle in a scientific escape from sensual suffering and from the hell of temptation which it is the fate of man to bear in a manly way was for him a symbol of the modern cowardice and modern atheism which explained away original sin, and a symbol of the cowardly modern escape from God, whose eternal question is 'Adam, where art thou?'

Here at last, in his relation to Woman, we see the real direction of Karl Kraus' thought. It is religious, eschatological.

Karl Kraus was engaged in an unceasing struggle to defend the majestic beauty of God's creation against every kind of modern gnostic: against men who were attempting to establish the rule of the Demiurgos in order to alter God's law, and who claimed that only a few of the elect were in the secret, since God's Law had not been universally revealed. Kraus defended the norm, the law and the rule; he was an enemy of all new schemes which, in humanitarian or intellectual disguise, attempt to attack and calumniate God, the giver of the Law.

Since these enemies and haters of God failed to convince mankind by their outright negation of God, they chose the more sly methods of accumulative calumny. They stopped saying that God did not exist when they saw that His defenders possessed rational weapons which were at least equal to theirs in the debate. Instead, they identified Nature with filth and Reality with ugliness, calling themselves naturalists or realists according to their favourite negation—naturalists when they denied Nature, or realists when they denied the transcendental idea inherent in Reality. At other times they called themselves—and still do today—Socialists, when they advocate the suppression of the social sphere of the family and harness production to political power; or Communists, when they wish to deprive man of everything he shares in common with other men. They called—and still call—their philosophy dialectical, when they are about to suppress every possibility of

dialogue and inaugurate an era in which dialogue and argument will no longer exist. They called themselves—and still do today—materialists, when they hate all created matter and, like the Gnostics and Manicheans of old, deny that it has any meaning, and attribute its creation to the fortuitous whims of a malicious and ignorant Demiurgos whose law is not final, and which will be changed one day by the inspired and enlightened few, whom Light and Knowledge elevate above the average Creature.

'Neo-gnostic', or 'neo-Manichean' are perhaps the most suitable terms to use to describe all these trends. Theodor Haecker, who threw out a few hints to this effect, is our only authority for underlining their presence in most of the intellectual manifestations of the twentieth century. It would need a complete system of theology and philosophy to refute them all; Kraus of course never had the ambition to create such a system, which even Theodor Haecker did not succeed in doing although he was so much more of a theologian and philosopher than Kraus, and possessed a mind which was infinitely more familiar than Kraus' with the phenomena of religious history. As Haecker says in his *Journal in the Night*, God's enemies in this aeon may be stronger than his defenders in the field of practical demonstration. But there are other methods of demonstration than that of Aristotle and St. Thomas: that of Plato and St. Augustine. The way of Truth can be foreshadowed in a full life, in a reconstituted and complete dialogue between contemporary sense and nonsense, in a style born of the heart and the mind—a way which moves towards a climax by catching glimpses of the unseen celestial city beyond the earthly one, whether it be the dusty and muddy streets of pagan Athens or half-Christian Rome, Florence or Paris, London or Copenhagen, or even Munich or Vienna of our own days.

It was far from Kraus' intention, and even beyond his personal gifts, to erect a system of any kind, or to offer a formal summary of the experience of a lifetime, for which the Germans have the untranslatable word *Erlebniss*. He did not want to teach, or to achieve any practical result. He just could not help reacting to men or events. Consciously or not, he followed the Gospel precept: 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' He spent long years in polemics, often against minor and temporary reputations with whom we could well dispense now, especially as so many of them have since been buried under the ruins of a world irrevocably destroyed. Yet for Kraus these were years devoted to the discern-

ment of rotten fruits and the discovery of barren trees which collapse under the Gospel curse. Karl Kraus was not concerned with demolishing their systems by one of his own; he was out to recognize them by their fruits.

He fought corruption and the commercialization of the intellectual world passionately and with every means at his disposal, yet this was not the main struggle of his life; indeed, he was almost too lenient in cases of frank and undisguised corruption which were innocent of any intellectual pretension or moral hypocrisy. Although polemics and satire occupied so great a part of his work, he was really more of a visionary than a moralist. The first *Fackel* of 1899 told the reader that the periodical would give them little and would suppress much. In reality, in the stormy thirty-seven years of *Die Fackel's* existence, Kraus accomplished an immense work of restoration. He restored misused words and values to their original meaning. Above all, his call was to humility and piety. Although, as we have seen, his mind was not in the least a theological one, there was much of the saint and the apostle about him, much of that supreme and charitable intolerance of the saints in revolt, who take the cause of God's honour and glory into their own hands, while not revolting against authority as such. Kraus' *Morality and Criminality*, more voluminous and less concise than the Gospel word on Mary Magdalene, is a most ardent defence of women sinners who are involved in court cases; all priests anxious to foster a devotion to Mary Magdalene would do well to read it. Genius and Beauty he approached with deep piety, good acting filled him with devotion. Some of the great actresses of his youth found in this stern and biting critic a troubadour, some of the younger ones even found in him a knight errant and defender. Actors of the old Burgtheater, before Max Reinhardt's ostentatious new 'realism' invaded this sanctuary from Berlin, were his epic heroes. The memory of the queer poet, short-story writer and humorist Peter Altenberg (P. A. to most Viennese round about 1890 to 1910—a kind of Prince of the *Vie de Bohème* of the Imperial city) could not be insulted without thunder coming from *Die Fackel*. Like all truly great rebels, Kraus was ultimately on the side of authority and law. He would have nothing to do with those critics of the Church and the Monarchy who objected to the institutions themselves.

Yet—and this is the most difficult point to explain—he was not a Catholic, neither was he even a monarchist in the usual

sense of the term. The Church was in his eyes the refuge of spiritual values. But he never crossed the threshold; perhaps he was temperamentally more fit to be a franc-tireur in the front line than a man seeking a refuge, or perhaps he loved his solitude too much to give it up, for all its sadness. As to the Monarchy, he objected that it was not monarchical enough, just as, later on, he objected that the Republic was not republican enough in its virtues. To sum up, this romantic Conservative, this more Franciscan than Marxian revolutionary, saw grace and truth, beauty and loyalty, fallen beyond recovery into the murderous hands of the deity Mammon, and of the twentieth-century German *Herrgott* of ideological and bellicose Utility (by contrast to the honest-to-God Anglo-Saxon 'utility', which, he often says, remains within its own legitimate province). He fought and decried the abuse of conservative ideals and showed, as nobody else did, the decay of a monarchical state to which he was fundamentally attached (his deep personal sympathy for the tragic hero Francis Ferdinand was frequently and movingly expressed after the murder at Sarajevo),¹ and which he saw was gradually betraying its principles, its religious and moral foundations to the modern evils of Mammon, the industrial Moloch and the diabolical science of 'free' thought.

During the First World War, and for some years afterwards, he sided temporarily with revolutionaries. He once said of Communism at this period of his life: 'Let the devil take it in practice, but may God hold it over our heads as an awful warning!' He hated the war, not from any 'pacifist motives', but because it was the German war of 1914, the war of that rationalized and scientific Devil whom the Germans of the twentieth century call the *Herrgott*—and whom Kraus considered to be the irreconcilable enemy of the true God—the war which was let loose by an accident, and which killed men by means of superior technique and more highly developed science. He saw in the world coalition against this *Herrgott* what was perhaps the last protest of man's instinct for life, of his reason and his humanity, in the face of the 'techno-romantic adventure' of the Germans. He felt that the instinctive reaction of mankind to German 'progress' would be temporarily victorious,

¹ 'Life indeed overcomes men of whom their age is not worthy. The fanaticism which kills them is but the courage of cowardice. Who was Francis Ferdinand? . . . Not a Hamlet, but that same Fortinbras, who was to arrive on a scene of horror and decay. And when even Fortinbras falls, something is rotten, even outside the state.' (*Black Magic*, 1914.)

but that German science would eventually conquer the victors by poisoning their minds with ideas of a still more colossal technique. When the *Titanic* sank, an event which was signalized by the world's Press as 'the sinking of milliards of dollars of income', he commented: 'They have betrayed God to the machine. Now He reappears *ex machina*.' Austria would perish, because in an ignominious age she had betrayed her rôle as a noble anachronism. Already before 1914 she had arrived at the stage when Kraus predicted that 'the Golden Fleece will soon be taken from the golden calf'. The old culture of a Christian Monarchy was vanishing in a mad dance around the golden calf—the idol of the new Germany, which had apostasized from the God of its poets and thinkers. Then came that summer day of forebodings. 'Four captains' bore—with reduced ceremony—the heroine of a great love story to her grave, beside her dead soldier husband, the last Prince in Europe whom Shakespeare would have called a 'most royall King'. Two coffins came home from Serajevo to Vienna.

And war came over the Earth.

* * *

Kraus fought a single-handed spiritual battle against the war of 1914 with the blessing of a few Christian Conservatives and a few revolutionary intellectuals, who however did not all understand the full meaning of this personal crusade and often confused it with commonplace pacifism. His vision of the war and his reaction to it are the subject of *The Last Days of Mankind*. No book since the *Inferno* has given a more universal picture of the damnation of an age; there exists likewise no book which needs such an ample commentary on names and allusions. Like the *Inferno*, and like all Kraus' minor books, *The Last Days* is strongly autobiographical. It is likewise a dream, a nightmare. Kraus rejected as unmanly, as we have already shown, the scientific explaining away of dreams. He claimed the right for the artist and the poet to dream on a stage and he believed in the absolute reality of the nightmare to which an age intent on killing dreams scientifically had reduced mankind in 1914 and ever since. *The Last Days* ends with an epilogue in verse called 'The Last Night'. Here the triumphant shout of victory: 'The anti-Christ has come!' precedes the silence—the silence of death over the earth. On a wild stormy night, God's image is destroyed. And at the end of the epilogue, God's voice repeats from the sky the Kaiser's memorable words:

'I did not will it!' The drama closes with a photograph of an event of strange symbolical significance: in Flanders, in 1917, an artillery battle had raged for several days, devastating a big field. Nothing remained but a wayside Calvary; the Cross has been shot away and the Crucified One is seen holding out His unnailed arms over empty space in a suppliant embrace of forgiveness.

Kraus did not invent his villains or his symbolical events; reality provided him with both. For this passionate writer often worked seventeen hours a day, always with a pen, never with a typewriter, since writing was his vocation and his hobby, his relief and his sacrifice, his ascetic self-torture and his joy and humorous relief. Kraus wrote only when reality overwhelmed him, whether it was the reality of an enchanting dream, or torturing nightmare. There is nothing decorative about Kraus' style but it is full-blooded; he wrote because he felt under a compulsion to write. He would often start with a banal item of daily news, or with a little personal incident, or with a note of local interest, sometimes even with something so apparently trivial as a printer's error, which altered the sense of his opponent's statement (often giving it its real sense, for Kraus believed that nothing is fortuitous in this created world!); then, as he developed his theme, he would lead up to a real revelation, a metaphysical secret which he has to write down, as if by the command of a higher and divine order. 'The thought takes possession of me,' he wrote once, and again: 'I do not find the word and take possession of it, the word finds me and takes possession of me.' He was a servant of the word, as were the Jewish prophets of old, from whom he was descended.

He left Jewry in his youth for Lutheran Protestantism—*faute de mieux*, we are perhaps justified in imagining—not to please the anti-Semites, but to escape the importunities of superficial Jewish talents who considered him 'one of themselves', and of the well-meaning but less intelligent philo-Semites who admired the sort of Jewish talents which Kraus detested and exposed in his *Heine and his consequences*.¹ Yet he remained fundamentally a Jewish prophet. For his overwhelming consciousness of the Invisible, this compulsion which he felt to write and to speak, the 'seventh day' which he never forgot, when Man and Woman were face to face with their Creator, his undying desire to return to this purity of

¹ In which he is fair to the nobler and deeper aspects of Heine, but shows the superficial brilliance of his criticism, which alone found imitators, whereas his melancholy found no compassion.

origin, his never-ending enquiry into the origin and full meaning of a word—all betray a spiritual descent which the physical one makes even more certain. Although he was a master of word and rhyme, Kraus' genius was not artistic, but prophetic and religious in essence, as in the Jewry of the Old Testament.

* * *

As things turned out, mankind has not vanished from the earth in a 'last night of storm', as Kraus foretold in the summer of 1917 when he composed his Epilogue in Switzerland. Nor did final peace come to the poet's heart in the embrace of the Unnailed Arms of Flanders, and this we have the right to deplore. His nightmare went on for two more decades. Yet the collapse of the Powers of the First World War opened an era in which, at least for a short while, he saw some hope, and in which he enjoyed the gratitude and affection of thousands who suffered in the massacre. Young Socialist workers and Red undergraduates from student hostels were for some years during the 1920s the most faithful readers of *Die Fackel*, and the most enthusiastic audiences of his 'lectures' in Vienna and Berlin. Little did they know of the prelates and feudal aristocrats of olden days, who were Kraus' admirers and friends; little did they understand why French *germanisant* scholars invited him so often to the Sorbonne. Kraus, for them, was not the philosopher of the mysteries of language, not the champion of the classical theatre of old, but simply the poet of their hearts who pronounced a mighty curse on the old world, who was the enemy of the counter-revolution of the philistines who, from Horthy's Hungary, tried to bring back 'normalcy' to Vienna. One of the strongest condemnations which Kraus made of this sort of unthinking counter-revolution in a lecture, and which he reprinted in *Die Fackel*, he took from Hilaire Belloc's *The French Revolution*. As Kraus himself carefully prevented the appearance of any kind of organized 'Krausianism', and as the ten or twelve thousand readers of *Die Fackel* all over the German-speaking world did not all know each other, or each other's motives, the misconception—this time a well-meant misconception by many generous young hearts—that Kraus was a near-Socialist revolutionary lasted for years. It was eventually cleared up by the Marxist 'rabbinate' and the Social-Democrat bureaucracy, to the regret of a sincere youth, but to the satisfaction of Kraus himself.

In 1929 Kraus produced his comedy on the post-war world. 'The Unconquerable' are the press gangsters, society crooks, blackmailers and parasites on the one hand, and on the other the official weaklings, safe in their formalist conscience, who allow this gangrene to spread and flourish. Again, this play was autobiographical and not invented: it was the story, with a few comic additions and symbolical changes in names, of the weakness of Police-President Dr. Schober over the case of the blackmailing Viennese editor of Hungarian-Jewish origin, Imre Békessy,¹ which Kraus had denounced in *Die Fackel*. Marxists questioned the statement in the title—is that world really unconquerable? Marxist writers wondered—will social revolution not eventually overcome them and are not these crooks and gangsters merely symptoms of 'Capitalism'?

During the subsequent years, the debate was pursued between Karl Kraus and Marxists of the Vienna variety. Little by little, Kraus proved that 'isms'—like Capitalism—are meaningless and empty abstractions. The struggle takes place on the plane of real existence, the true battle is an immediate and personal one, it is to be waged against visible and tangible symbols, not against systems as such. Hitler's movement was for Kraus a 'mental plague', not a political abstraction, like 'Fascism'. By 1932 the break was complete, hastened in a way by the death of Fritz Austerlitz, editor of the Social-Democrat *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, for many years one of Kraus' personal friends. In one of his most memorable articles in *Die Fackel*, Kraus gave a definite No to the *Anschluss*, in the democratic and progressive form in which Social-Democracy tried to propagate the idea, thus hoping to take the wind out of the sails of the newly launched Nazi boat. With all his criticism of the Austrian state, old and new, Kraus, who was no politician and never wanted to be one, yet saw in Austria one immense advantage: it was not a national state, so that, having no national ambitions, this Austrian state was less likely to become actively hostile to Truth and the Spirit than those states which have a highly organized propaganda and fanaticism at their

¹ In the play, Békessy becomes Barkassy (from *Barkasse* or *Bare cash*). There would be no need to name him here except for the fact that he is a leading American 'popular democrat' at present, and was a fervid pro-Communist 'American correspondent' at the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in Budapest in 1949—a posthumous proof of Kraus' unflinching knowledge of human character. Békessy was deported from Austria on police orders in 1930, but despite Kraus' repeated public demands, *Die Fackel* was not sued for libel by him or by Dr. Schober, who dealt with the case with great leniency.

service. The state, while it is a by-product of history and culture, is likely to remain within its proper sphere, which is to deal with questions of public order, the police and administration. If a new state comes into being as the result of the fulfilment of grandiose aspirations it will usurp the place of religion and of intellectual culture, which is not its province.

When in the following year, in 1933, Hitler came to power in Germany, Kraus' immediate reaction was one of silence, a silence which he intended to be final. *Die Fackel* appeared only once to print his speech over the grave of a dear old friend the architect Adolf Loos, and this little poem:

*Man frage nicht was all die Zeit ich machte, ich bleibe stumm und sage
nicht warum. Man träumt von einer Sonne, die lachte; es geht vorbei, nachher
war's einerlei. Das Wort entschlief, als jene Welt erwachte.¹*

From every corner of Europe, German literature in exile reacted to these lines; practically every anti-Hitler emigré publication appearing in 1933 in Paris, Prague or Saarbrücken reproduced them and commented on the silence of Karl Kraus. Most comments could have belonged to the 'magic operetta' called *Literature* in which Kraus, a few years earlier, had made the whole literary intelligentsia conspire against him. Some writers expressed the disappointment of the scandalmongers, who hoped that *Die Fackel* would find plenty of 'satirical' stuff in the scandalous régime of the Nazis. Others again were somewhat pathetic: they were minor writers who hoped that Kraus would give voice to their feelings and opinions on Hitler better than they could do themselves, and felt deprived of a 'leader' who did not aspire to lead them—or anybody else for that matter.

Finally, the least worthy reaction of all came from the mediocrities. In their resentment and rancour, some authors who had been exposed in *Die Fackel* thought that the time had come for them to hit back at an antagonist who had laid down his arms and decided upon a voluntary silence. Few reacted with any genuine sorrow to the four sad lines, to the silence which said so much more than the din raised by others. Few of Kraus' former friends

¹ Do not wonder what I have been doing all this time,
For silent I will remain and not say why.
A laughing sun still appears in a dream.
All this will pass and nothing will matter any more.
The word died away when that world awoke.

and associates were still alive and active when he was sixty.¹ Nobody felt strong enough to answer in his stead, and so he gave the answer himself. A *Fackel* of nearly 700 pages appeared in the spring of 1934 with the sub-title 'Why *Die Fackel* does not appear.' This number was probably the most important of them all.

Here he says Hitler is beyond the reach of a satirist who can do nothing to destroy him. Only Hitler can destroy Hitler and this he will surely do. What more could Kraus say? The Western world, alarmed by Hitler, could not understand if he said that the Witches' Sabbath in Goethe's *Faust* was the true symbol of Hitler's rule. Now everything is coming true which had hitherto been sensed, suspected or foretold. Hidden crime and madness come to the surface, the surface becomes the dreadful physiognomy of the new masters of Germany. Metaphors in the language (always this mystery of the language which never left Kraus!) now reveal their meaning unmistakably. Since Hitler has instituted concentration camps, the Germans know why their language speaks of casting salt into open wounds (this metaphor must have come into English via the German); the metaphor exists because the thing was once true in Germany, and it has come true again because the hidden meaning of words is always revealed eventually by the mysterious Giver of words. Words come true, and nightmares come true, because life is a vision seen in a dream and because it is written that the meaning of the Word will appear fully on Judgement Day and doubt will be no more.

Yet does Hitler concern a man who is lost in exploring the mystery of words? No, he concerns the brave policeman, and him alone. For the first time, Kraus gave his unconditional support to

¹ In the early years of *Die Fackel* they were the dramatist Frank Wedekind and the Vienna poet Peter Altenberg, both of whom died before 1914; the poet Franz Janowitz and the art historian Franz Grüner both killed in action in the War, the painter Oskar Kokoschka, the diplomatic correspondent and literary critic Robert Schey, the two most eminent German women poets Else Lasker-Schüler and Mechtilde Lichnowsky (better known in England as Princess Lichnowsky, wife of the German Ambassador of 1914); the Munich dramatist Heinrich Fischer, the stage manager Berthold Viertel and the literary historian Leopold Liegler (all three of whom wrote profound studies of Kraus); Theodor Haecker, and perhaps the most permanent of all, Adolf Loos, the pioneer of modern architecture, who was also a brilliant writer of memoirs, and despite his hard hearing, a most witty conversationalist, whose epigrams Kraus often quotes. Some of the earlier friends and associates of *Die Fackel* turned to enmity: best known in this category is Franz Werfel, later author of the much read *Song of Bernadette*. Let us note, for curiosity's sake, the name of the English renegade Houston Stewart Chamberlain, son-in-law of Wagner, who analysing 'unprejudiced objective history' in an article of the early *Fackel* comes to the conclusion that such pretences hide anti-Catholic prejudice. Later, in 1914, Chamberlain betrayed not only England, but *Die Fackel*.

the Austrian state and his unstinted praise to a statesman, the 'brave policeman', Engelbert Dollfuss. All his old and undiminished powers of indignation now went into play against those immature minds of the Left, who were gambling with formal Democracy and even Revolution, by their opposition to Dollfuss, who, at the risk of his own life, had the courage to defend theirs. For the first time, under Dollfuss, the state paid official tribute to 'a great Austrian' on his sixtieth birthday, and then Karl Kraus in his turn, so shortly afterwards, paid one more eloquent public tribute to the murdered Federal Chancellor, in whom he saw the martyr, and, had he succeeded, the saviour of Europe. An act of moral courage, if we think of the unpopularity that this siding with a 'dictator' brought to Kraus amongst his former Socialist admirers.

His last two years were spent while Austria was in its death agony under Schuschnigg. His last writings dealt with problems of Shakespearean acting, and right up to the year of his death his editorial work on the new German Shakespeare continued; the charm and the enchantment of a *Midsummer Night's Dream* consoling him for past nightmares on the eve of a new nightmare, the realization of which he was not to see.

He died, as we have seen, in June 1936, in the same week as G. K. Chesterton, sixty-two years old like him—G. K. C. of whom he knew little and who almost certainly never knew that so far from London, in another capital of Europe, another eccentric, known to all about town, was fighting much the same battle as he: the battle of the good sense of God against the modern gnostics of the mechanical Demiurgos, the battle for the true sense of the Word, for human dignity, for charity, and for the humble humour of those who are reconciled to Creation. A friend in troubled Vienna wrote to me in those days words which I may be allowed to recall here as an epitaph:

G. K. C. and Karl Kraus are dead! Over our youth, yours and mine, the sun has set twice in the same week, in the West and in the East, in London and in Vienna.

Perhaps the Iron Curtain East of Vienna and West of Prague, Berlin and Budapest will one day be no more. But in none of these cities will there ever be Kraus-evenings again. Exile from place is accidental and temporary. Exile from time is final and belongs to the essence of earthly things.

CHRISTIANITY IN ABYSSINIA

By E. F. WISE¹

NO one but the wayfarer who approaches the Abyssinian Plateau from the coast can begin to understand why and how some form of Christianity has been able, in this remote corner of the Middle East, to withstand the elsewhere irresistible tide of Islam.

The Western shores of the Red Sea are part and parcel of Arab civilization, brought thither by merchants and seamen, war lords and imâms. Departing thence, the road traverses a wide belt of desert, whereafter escarpment after mighty escarpment looms up in the West. Time and again the traveller thinks that now at last he must have reached the rim of the Plateau, but as he rounds the next bend new gigantic walls of solid rock tower above his head.

It is only after he has reached the height of 8000 feet that the Abyssinian Plateau opens up before him, brown and parched for three-quarters of the year, fertile and verdant during the three months' rainy season. Here the character of the inhabitants changes. Turban and gellabiya give place to the *futa*—a white homespun cotton shawl, draped over head and shoulders by both sexes. No woman is now to be seen trudging in the dust behind her mounted husband, but pictures of the Flight into Egypt come to life as bearded men lead mules whereon ride mothers with their babes slung on their backs. From euphorbia-crested hilltops rise round or square churches, their roofs crowned with elaborate Coptic crosses. This is a Christian land.

The reasons why a Christian society, on the defensive since the seventh century, has been able to survive in this secluded region

¹ The author served as a Civil Affairs Officer under the British Military Administration Eritrea for more than two years and spent most of that time in the Seræ Division which lies in the mountains along the frontier of Ethiopian Tigræi. He made a special study of native customary law and religious institutions, and had many personal friends among Abyssinians from both sides of the border.—EDITOR.

have been the subject of a good deal of inconclusive speculation ever since the days when rumours of Prester John's fabulous realm first began to stir the imagination of Western Christendom.

Islam's failure to conquer the Abyssinian highlands was not due to any lack of effort. Repeated attempts were made in the name of the Prophet to reduce the Christian mountain fortress and some of them came perilously near to succeeding. If in the end all failed, it may well have been because, whereas the Crescent had won its easy victories throughout the Middle East over the effete heirs of Byzantium, in Abyssinia the sword of Islam was to be blunted upon metal even harder than itself: men used to a Spartan life among inhospitable mountains; dark warriors in whom Faith burned with as bright a flame as that which inspired the armies of the Prophet. The southward thrust of the Crescent was halted in Abyssinia, even as its onslaught upon the Occident was spent at Tours and Poitiers and, later, against the walls of Vienna.

Impenetrable mountain fastnesses and a climate whose harsh extremes breed a tough fighting race as warlike as any in Africa are only a partial answer to the problem, which is essentially a spiritual one. At the time of the Hegira Eastern Christianity, severed from the Benedictine Renaissance of the Western Church, had spent its vigour in arid controversies between hair-splitting theologians. Hollowed out and sapless, as it were, it fell an easy victim to Koranic puritanism. The Abyssinian Church, on the other hand, had preserved and even intensified the austere traditions of the Desert Fathers from whom it had received its doctrine in the fourth century. If we accept it as axiomatic that the greater the demands which a faith makes upon its followers, the stronger is its hold over them, the Coptic Christians of Abyssinia were better equipped to meet Islam on its own puritan ground than were any other Eastern Christians.

Yet, this same quality of uncompromising tenacity which enabled the Abyssinians to preserve their Christian heritage bore within itself from the beginning the seed of degeneration: a tendency not merely to preserve, but to petrify. There has, in the Western sense, been no evolution in the Copt Church. Its intellectual armoury has remained the same as it was when Alexandria upheld at the Council of Chalcedon the Eutychian Monophysite heresy. This heresy, which denies the Human Nature of the Redeemer, remains to this day the central doctrine of the Copt Church. It is succinctly epitomized in a convention of Abyssinian

sacred painting which represents the Blessed Trinity in the guise of three absolutely identical bearded old men.

To a Western Christian, it seems difficult to reconcile this apparent negation of Christ's Human Nature with Atonement, Passion and the Words from the Cross. Some Copt theologians have, indeed, tried to narrow the doctrinal gap between themselves and the Christians of the West. Their interpretation of the Eutychian heretical doctrine appears to be that the two Natures of Christ are united 'without intermingling, without alteration and without confusion, in that the Divine Nature of the Word underwent no change in substance and could therefore not be subject to Passion or to death' but that 'Passion and death were confined to the Human Nature'. Finally, that 'Divinity and Humanity were so closely integrated as to form a single individual, a single Being, a single Jesus Christ, Perfect God and Perfect Man' and that 'there is therefore in Jesus Christ a single Ego, a single Person—the Person of the Word, the Incarnate Son of God'.¹

The ambiguity of the Monophysite doctrine is due to the fact that the Greek word *physis* is equally correctly translatable into Latin as *natura* and *persona*. In order to eliminate this ambiguity, the Council of Chalcedon defined the meaning of *physis* as Nature in the absolute sense, considered apart from the Person. The Monophysites rejected this definition, stressing the single *physis* of Christ and accusing the Western Church of Nestorianism. For the Copts, the single *physis* actually seems to denote not a single Nature but rather the single Person of the God-Man.²

The main reason nowadays for the continued separatism of the Copt Church in Abyssinia is of course not this very subtle point of theological definition but fear—a rather natural fear—on the part of the Copt clergy of having imposed upon them the infinitely higher standard of conduct and of learning which is maintained by the native Catholic clergy of the Ethiopian Rite.

Christianity was brought to the Abyssinian Plateau from Alexandria by St. Frumentius in A.D. 344. Ever since then, the Abyssinian Coptic Church, despite its encirclement, has remained a direct dependency of the Egyptian Coptic Patriarchate. The Province of Abyssinia—by which name of course should be understood no national entity but the Christian Plateau districts of both Ethiopia and Eritrea—is under the spiritual governance of the

¹ M. Jugie, A.A., *L'Oriente Cristiano e l'unità della Chiesa*, 1937.

² L. Duchesne, *Autonomies ecclésiastiques*: 'Les Eglises séparées', Paris, 1896.

Abuna or Metropolitan. Up to 1929, this dignitary was always appointed by the Patriarch of Alexandria.¹

On the strength of an apocryphal canon of the Council of Nicaea which the Coptic Church has accepted as valid, the choice of an Abyssinian as Metropolitan of the Abyssinian Province of that Church was precluded. For centuries therefore only foreigners—i.e. Egyptians—were eligible for this office. Upon the death of a Metropolitan, the King of Kings despatched a delegation to Alexandria to pay over to the Patriarch a tribute² and solicit from him the appointment of a successor. It is hardly surprising that the Negus, in order to avoid paying so large a sum too frequently, stipulated that youth was the most important qualification in any nominee, even at the expense of intellectual or moral qualities and despite the rule that no Metropolitan could be appointed under the age of fifty.

The Abuna enjoyed great honours, few rights and very little power. Effective control of Church affairs lay in the hands of the abbots of a few great monasteries: Debra Libanos in Shoa, Debra Tabor in Amhara and Debra Bizen in that part of the Tigrai which is now in Eritrea.

The year 1929 is of great importance in the history of the Coptic Church of Ethiopia, for the Emperor Hailé Selassié then achieved, to all intents and purposes, autocephaly for the Ethiopian Church. The inherent Erastian tradition of the Abyssinian Church combined with the Emperor's caesaro-papist ambitions to make the Church a willing tool of his imperial policy. In order to achieve this end, he secured the Patriarch's consent to the establishment of an autocephalous episcopate for the whole Abyssinian Province, including the Christian part of Eritrea. The Italians countered this move—which was bound to have an unsettling effect in their colony—by separating the Eritrean Copts from the jurisdiction of the new Ethiopian hierarchy and prevailing upon the Patriarch of Alexandria to raise the Abbot of Debra Bizen to episcopal rank as Head, directly under himself, of the Coptic Church in Eritrea.

¹ Despite any popular conception to the contrary, there were of course never 'priest-kings' of Ethiopia. Archbishop Mathew very well expresses the relationship between the Church and the Solomonic Throne when he writes: 'The religious functions of the Elect of God were purely passive. The monasteries lay grouped around the Sovereign; the priests and monks pressed on him. In an intricate relationship the Sovereign's life became in time inseparable from that of the monastic order on which the Throne reposed.' (*Ethiopia*).

² After 1780, this was paid in Maria Theresa dollars amounting to 47,000 (about £7000).

After the Italian conquest of Ethiopia the severance of the whole Abyssinian Province from the Alexandrian Patriarchate became almost complete. At the same time, the Copts of Eritrea were automatically returned to the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan in Addis Ababa. It is interesting to know that Emperor Hailé Selassié, after his return to the throne, changed but little of the ecclesiastical reforms carried out by the Italians. The 'Fascists' had completed the conversion of the Church into an instrument of the State and this suited him very well indeed. For obvious political reasons it also suited him very well to maintain a hold over the Eritrean Copts through the fact that the Eritrean Abuna, the Abbot of Debra Bizen, had been subordinated by the Italians themselves in 1937—during the time of their Impero—to the Metropolitan in Addis Ababa.

Today the Coptic Church of Abyssinia has, notwithstanding a theoretical subordination to the Patriarch of Alexandria, become clearly a tool of Ethiopian imperial policy. This is painfully evident in Eritrea, whose Coptic Bishop, Abuna Markos, together with his clergy are almost to a man pan-Ethiopian agitators—and by no means always honorary ones.

The holding of effective power by the great Lord Abbots has produced a supremacy of the regular over the secular clergy which is one of the most striking features of the Abyssinian Church. Today every monastery controls all the parish clergy in its area. Livings and glebes are bestowed or withdrawn by the abbots and in theory—though hardly ever in practice—the *qeshi* (parish priest) is supposed to attend the monastery at intervals for a refresher course in doctrine. The Italians tried to loosen this stranglehold of the monasteries by the introduction of secular rural deans (*liqeqanât*) but nearly all these offices have since been reabsorbed by the abbots.

Almost nowhere else in the world are secular clergy so down-trodden, so poor and so illiterate. In fact the intellectual level of the average village priest is so low that though most can read, a few only can write. In most cases their moral level is hardly higher. This state of affairs is scarcely to be marvelled at, since no educational standard, either literary or doctrinal, is obligatory in a candidate for ordination. Indeed, up to a few years ago, any man could buy ordination for the price of two measures of salt.¹

¹ 'Ceux qui veulent recevoir quelque ordre vont trouver l'Aboua. Moyennant certains cadeaux fixés par la coutume (habituellement deux blocs de sel) ils se font donner tous les ordres qu'ils veulent. Aucun examen sur l'instruction ou sur la conduite des ordinants ne précède la cérémonie.' Janin, *Les Eglises Orientales*.

The *qeshì* lives as a barefoot peasant among peasants. He is married (though neither he nor a deacon may remarry after widowhood) and he and his sons till the glebe with their own hands. There is however just one minimum requirement for both parish priests and deacons, and on this depends the survival of the Coptic liturgy which else would long ago have become unrecognizable as an act of Christian worship: the clergy must learn the liturgy by heart in *Gheez*, the ancient liturgical language of the Abyssinian Coptic Church.¹ Since *Gheez* is no longer spoken anywhere, and is but half understood by many a Coptic celebrant, even the most ignorant, careless or lazy *qeshì* is incapable of improvising or of altering the sacred text. Every parish must have at least four deacons as well as the *qeshì*, since the Coptic ritual requires five celebrants. The deacons (*deftera*, literally: 'a man able to read') of a village church hardly ever aspire to full priesthood and are content with the small honours and emoluments of their Minor Orders. Neither *qeshì* nor *deftera* is responsible for the parish funds, which are administered by a churchwarden (*halekha*).

When I had to attend Copt services in my official capacity I was always able to detect the lingering wraith of the Mass amidst the slovenliness of the Ritual, the incredible tawdriness of the vestments, the tinkling sound of silver rattles and the heavy barbaric beat of African drums. There is no doubt that the Copt service has retained something of the main structure of the fourth century Mass but it has been overlaid by many alien influences, both African and Hebraic—the latter either in direct tradition from the Jews of Alexandria or through the *Fallasha*, that mysterious race of Abyssinian dark-skinned Jews.

As a corollary to the power of the Abbots, the Abyssinian Church has always given pride of place to the Life Regular as against the secular clergy. But in order to gain a correct picture of monastic life in Abyssinia we must forget all the Benedictine tradition of the West and throw our minds straight back to the Desert Fathers with their emphasis upon contemplation and mortification.

There are only two Orders in Abyssinia: that of St. Thecla (Teklehaimanot) with its Mother House at Debra Libanos in Amhara and that of St. Eustachius (Ewostatewos) with its Mother House at Debra Bizen in the Eritrean Tigray.

¹ The Abyssinian Coptic Liturgy is an expanded version in *Gheez* of the Liturgy of St. Mark, with the addition of parts of an anaphora showing Syrian influence. They call it the 'Liturgy of the Holy Apostles'.

An Abyssinian monastery is in outward appearance very different from anything resembling our Western conception of a religious community. It is a village, perched on the top of a steep hill, consisting of the usual type of Abyssinian house (*hedmo* or *owgdo* according to the district). But for the smaller size of the houses, the visitor might well imagine himself in any ordinary village. The place is dominated by and centred upon a large church, usually circular, surrounded by a wide processional space enclosed by a wall with gatehouses. There is hardly any community life in the Western sense and each monk dwells by himself in his own hut. Some monasteries have a refectory as well as a communal kitchen, others only the kitchen, whence the monks fetch food to eat in their own huts. In some communities each member cooks his own food at home.

All Regular clergy are celibate. In some monasteries, Debra Bizen for instance, celibacy is carried to such a length that no female animal—indeed not even a hen—is permitted within the precincts. At Bizen, too, there are a few members of the community who carry on the tradition of the hermits in the Egyptian desert. These men inhabit inaccessible caves below the cliff edge and their food is lowered to them in baskets. They neither see nor speak with their fellow monks. In other communities, such as End'Abona in the Seræ where the foundation is five centuries old, there are both monks and nuns. The men's village on one hilltop is balanced by the women's village upon the opposite one, both being under the same abbot and sharing the large church which stands on the saddle between the hills. I had the opportunity of meeting some of these holy women and of talking to them. I found them sincerely pious and happy and had the impression that the proximity of the two sexes was not abused in any way.

The influence of the monasteries in Ethiopia goes beyond purely ecclesiastical matters, since they administer in many respects the Customary Law of the *Fetha Negast* Code and also control fiefs (*gultî*) as far as these survive. Italian writers admit that even in Eritrea the monasteries were doing good work in the matter of bringing about conciliations in blood feuds. Monasteries also fulfil the functions of ecclesiastical courts of the Second Instance.¹

¹ 'L'Opera ed influenza degli priori è riuscita assai spesso benefica per la conclusione di conciliazioni di sangue tra famiglie, stirpi e regioni.'—A. Pollera, *Le popolazioni indigene dell'Eritrea*. 'Questi conventi costituiscono il tribunale di seconda istanza e sono formati dal priore giudicante e dai monachi come consulenti del primo.'—A. Pollera, *La Procedura indigena in*

It must not however be imagined that the Abyssinian Coptic Church in general is free from abuses or that the intelligent laity do not fully recognize those that exist. There is on the one hand much moral and sexual laxity among the *geshis*, and on the other hand some of the demands made upon the faithful are so stern that they border upon cruelty. Nevertheless, the hold of this Church over its people is very strong indeed. This is not primarily a merit of the Church but of the deeply Christian Abyssinian people, who utter a prayer with every handful of corn they sow and never conclude any important action or transaction without solemnly invoking upon it the Divine blessing.

Among the many grievances felt by the laity is the great number of holy days of obligation on which no work is allowed. This has swollen to more than two hundred in a year, leaving fewer than one hundred and fifty days on which peasants are permitted by the Church to till their land. It is a most real and justified cause for complaint and is especially resented by Copts when ploughing and sowing are urgently necessary in order to catch the uncertain Little Rains. These usually coincide with the fifteen consecutive feast days of Eastertide and in some years only Muslims are free to take advantage of this short and all-important rainfall for sowing.

Sometimes, too, after villagers have built a new church with their own hands, during the limited working days permitted to them, the local abbot may refuse to consecrate the altar (*tabot*) because he, or else the *geshi* of the neighbouring village whose parishioners the builders had been hitherto, does not wish to lose their tithes in labour and kind.

There are also frequent and genuine complaints against *geshis* who arbitrarily refuse to administer Sacraments to parishioners who have incurred their displeasure for personal reasons. There is of course a theoretical right of appeal in such cases to the Abuna, but humble peasants would be reluctant to avail themselves of it for fear of making further bad blood between themselves and their parish priest.

Despite these very real grievances, however, the Abyssinian is anything but half-hearted in the practice of his religion and he is willing to go a long way in order to meet the harsh demands im-

Etiopia ed in Eritrea. (Pollera writes with special authority, since he was a District Commissioner under the Italian administration and successively married two Eritrean ladies.—E. F. W.)

posed upon him by his Church. For example, the only Mass on Sunday is said at dawn, or even earlier, and attendance may involve a long walk with a very stiff climb at the end of it. Nevertheless, hardly any able-bodied villagers will fail to attend. Penances imposed at confession are so heavy that the majority of Abyssinian Copts dare not receive their Communion during the years when they are subject to temptations of the flesh. Moreover, save in cases of illness, married couples are not allowed to receive Holy Communion separately. Fasts total 180 days in the year and are so strict that nothing of animal origin, neither milk nor butter nor eggs, can be eaten. Not even pregnant women or nursing mothers, nor very old people, care to ask for a dispensation, so that all adults subsist and work on bread, beans and a little oil (rape oil, not olive). The Lenten Fast lasts for fifty-six days; that before and during Advent for six weeks, and there is besides these a fast of forty days before the Feast of *Mesqel* in September at the end of the Rains, which commemorates the Finding of the True Cross.¹ Moreover, except during the weeks between Easter and Pentecost, and at Christmastide, all Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year are also fast days.

Nowadays, signs of incipient restiveness are showing themselves here and there under the more arbitrary demands of church authorities. For instance, a friend of mine, a very intelligent and progressive District Chief,² successfully compelled an unwilling abbot to consecrate the *tabot* of a new village church. He threatened that if the dignitary in question persisted in his refusal the Catholic Bishop of the Ethiopian Rite would be approached and the whole parish would embrace the Catholic Faith. Under that Chief, the example would probably have been followed throughout his District, and it seems rather a pity that the Abbot was shrewd enough to yield gracefully to this formidable threat. This episode, by the way, underlines what other Coptic laymen

¹ *Mesqel* is not only a solemn official occasion for both Church and State. It is also the most popular feast in the Church calendar. Falling at the end of the Big Rains, it is the prelude to the harvest. Fires are lit on hilltops everywhere—presumably in memory of St. Helena's beacon fires—and for three days the people make merry with dancing, torches and cries of '*hëyo, hëyo*'. Though, to Westerners, the prominence given to the Finding of the True Cross is puzzling, it may be remembered that when Christianity first reached the Abyssinian uplands, the event of A.D. 326, less than twenty years before, must still have been 'hot news', the latest intelligence in the Christian world and clinching evidence for the truth of the Glad Tidings brought by Frumentius.

² His name was Blatta Cahsai Malù, District Chief of Tzellima and Sefaa in Eritrea. He was known to be anti-Ethiopian and a loyal friend of the British Administration. He was also a great gentleman and one of our most enlightened and efficient District Chiefs. He was assassinated by his political opponents on 12 February, 1949.

had often told me: that they, unlike their theologians—and of course unlike ourselves—are unaware of any deep doctrinal gulf separating them from us.

There remains a last question to be answered: what is the influence of the Abyssinian Coptic Church in the fields of learning and art? There is doubtless a certain amount of scholarship to be found in the great monasteries, although Copt theologians, like the minor and later Schoolmen, devote too much of their acumen to doctrinal hairsplitting and to acrimonious feuds between the different monastic schools. On the other hand, in the monasteries the study of *Gheez* is generally on a high level and the monks are masters of the most beautiful penmanship in Abyssinian script. Ancient manuscripts in some Abyssinian monastery libraries also have exceedingly fine illuminations which can stand comparison with contemporary European codices. Some of the best known are the seventeenth-century ones at Cusquam Abbey near Gondar; during the past year a sensational find of fourteenth and fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts was made at the monastery of Debra Mariam, on the Eritrean side of the Ethiopian border.

In the field of art, however, comparison with the West is apt to be misleading. There have been no great architects, no great composers and no really great painters to place their genius at the service of divine worship. The churches themselves are simple, rough stone buildings, round or square, with doors and unglazed wooden window-frames and mullions fashioned with the adze. Almost all the space inside is occupied by the sanctuary—always square, even in round churches—whose painted walls and closed doors hide the Holy of Holies from the eyes of the faithful in the tradition of Solomon's Temple and cut them off from any intelligent participation in the ritual. No one but the priests may set eyes on the altar stone (*tabot*), and in the few short moments during the service when the sanctuary doors are open the faithful behold nothing but the smoky glow of candles in the dim, windowless interior and the strange mingled colours of vestments and altar-cloth. In any case, since there is room for only a narrow corridor round the sanctuary, most of the worshippers in a village church, including all the women, are expected to congregate in the enclosure outside the building, under the wild fig trees or the candelabra-like euphorbias whereon hang stone bells that are struck during consecration.

The sanctuary walls are often painted from floor to ceiling.

The frescoes, in brilliant tempera, faithfully preserve the tradition of Byzantium and in some churches I have been greatly impressed by their austere, solemn and hieratic beauty. As a rule, three of the walls are covered with scenes taken respectively from the Old Testament, the New Testament and the apocryphal *Gospel of Mary* which has its place as a fifth gospel in the Canon of the Coptic Church. The Blessed Virgin is greatly venerated and loved by Coptic Christians and the church calendar allots a feast to her every month in the year. The fourth wall of the sanctuary is devoted to the lives of Abyssinian saints, strange wayward creatures, some of them. There is the wise Ewostatewos, traversing the Dead Sea upon his leather cloak in the company of Our Lord and of angel oarsmen; the gentle Gebremenfes Kullus stands in a shirt of pelts, attended by lions and leopards and hearkening to the whisper of a dove; angels triumphantly snatch from devils the soul of the fierce Somûn, reformed cannibal who expiated the devouring of seventy victims by giving one cup of water to a man dying of thirst.

There is remarkable, albeit barbaric, craftsmanship in the priestly crowns and the elaborate processional crosses, carved out of debased silver which is chiefly obtained by melting down Maria Theresa dollars. Altar plate is usually undistinguished—indeed, in the poorer village churches aluminium pots and pans often do duty for it. The old ceremonial fringed umbrellas of blue and silver, reminiscent of huge Victorian lampshades, which are carried in procession are, alas, fast disappearing. They are being replaced by hideous European cotton umbrellas, with segments in the national colours of Ethiopia. Vestments are gorgeous but tawdry. They are made of cheap shiny rayon, in brilliant hues which have no affinity with the liturgical colours. Crumpled and bedraggled from careless and slovenly handling, they are never mended or cleaned and many are literally falling to pieces.

But whoso has seen the ecstatic faces of the congregation; who has heard the strange wailing chants of the double choir, with its scarcely recognizable version of barefoot cantoris and decani conducted with violent gestures of long rods by two choirmasters; who has surrendered to the spell of booming drums, weird accompaniment to an act of Christian worship, cannot but admit that this form of Christianity, wrenched long ago from the parent tree and incapable for lack of life-giving sap of any further growth, is nonetheless very genuine.

It is most interesting to note that the inherent weaknesses of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia have been clearly observed by Moscow and that one of the many overtures made by the men in the Kremlin to Addis Ababa was a delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church, who stressed the affinity between the two Eastern Churches. There need I am sure be no fear that either Communism or any other form of godlessness could ever make headway among this most conservative of all Christian peoples. Nevertheless, I feel equally sure that no spiritual revival for Abyssinian Christianity is to be expected from the static and almost petrified Coptic Church. Any promise of this kind must be looked for elsewhere.

It is indeed a poignant thought that the hope of Catholic Christendom should have come so near to fulfilment when, in 1604, the Emperor Susenyos decided to renounce in the name of his people the Monophysite heresy and to submit them and himself to the spiritual jurisdiction of the Holy See.

Susenyos established the famous Jesuit Mission in Ethiopia and Father Alfonso Mendez was appointed Catholic Patriarch there. The Emperor certainly believed in all sincerity that his sovereign act would suffice to secure the conversion of his subjects and to safeguard their Catholic future. In this belief he solemnly declared:

We, Sultan Sagad, by the grace of God Emperor of Ethiopia, believe and confess that St. Peter was constituted Prince of the Apostles, Head of the Universal Church. That, moreover, the Pope of Rome is the true and legitimate successor of St. Peter; that he has the same power, dignity and primacy over all the Catholic Church throughout the world. Therefore We recognize the Roman Church as the Mother and Mistress of all churches and with her do condemn and anathematize all the heresies which she has condemned and anathematized, notably those of Dioscuros and Eutyches as they have been especially embedded here, and promise the obedience due to the said Roman Church in the person of our Holy Father Pope Urban VIII at present reigning. So help Us God and these holy Evangels.¹

The reason why the Jesuit Mission failed and was later on evicted by Susenyos' successor Fasilides—who destroyed his predecessor's work as thoroughly as did Elizabeth that of Mary—was primarily lack of imagination. The insistence of the Jesuits on imposing the Roman Liturgy—although permitting it to be re-

¹ Quoted from Archbishop Mathew's *Ethiopia*, p. 52.

cited in *Gheez*—upon a people insufficiently prepared and unwilling to accept it and, above all, their refusal to train native clergy for the priesthood, were the chief factors responsible for this failure.

These mistakes were not repeated in the early nineteenth century, when a new attempt was made by the Lazarist Giuseppe Sapeto, whose long and strenuous efforts were crowned in 1839 by the institution of the Apostolic Prefecture of Abyssinia, which was soon afterwards raised to the status of a Vicariate under the venerable Gioacchino de Jacobis. In 1846, it became possible to create a second Vicariate Apostolic for Galla and southern Ethiopia under the Capuchin (later Cardinal) Guglielmo Massaia. These were followed in 1911 by the Vicariate Apostolic for Eritrea; in 1913 by the Prefecture Apostolic of Kaffa and in 1914 by that for Djibouti.

Throughout the first century of renewed Catholic effort the brunt of the missionary work was borne by French Lazarists and Italian Capuchins. But it soon became clear that lasting success could only be achieved among this people—whose Christianity had never sprung from European missionary sources—by training an efficient and enthusiastic native priesthood. There are now several flourishing Catholic seminaries on Abyssinian soil for the training of priests, notably at Keren and Saganeiti in Eritrea. The Liturgy is now universally in *Gheez* and follows in broad outlines that of other Uniate Oriental Rites, which seem to be more congenial to the Abyssinian mind than the Roman Liturgy.

The final achievements came in 1911, with the founding of the Collegium Aethiopicum in Rome, and in 1930, with the appointment of the first Abyssinian Ordinary. The Abyssinian Bishop of the Ethiopian Rite depends directly on the Congregation Pro Ecclesia Orientale and has his seat in Asmara, Eritrea. The present Ordinary, Mgr. Kidanemariam Kassà, Titular Bishop of Tibari, is, measured by whatever standard, a man of outstanding personality and intellectual gifts.

I myself often met Abyssinian Catholic priests of the Ethiopian Rite and was greatly impressed by their sincere sense of dedication and their high standard of education and behaviour, as well as by the austerity of their personal lives. When some dignified young priest led me into a single room with bare walls of rough stone and a floor of beaten earth, its only furniture a wooden table and chair, a camp bed, a wooden chest for clothes and a shelf of books, I felt

myself back in Europe in the lost centuries of the Dark Ages, when parish priests must have lived just so and only the Church kept alive the flame of civilization.

The Abyssinian laity are already awake to the immense difference in the standard of education and morals between Catholic and Coptic parish clergy and I am convinced that this higher standard is bound in the end to win. The main difficulty is a transient political one. Seeing that the dissident Copt clergy have debased their spiritual dependence upon Addis Ababa to political subservience, native Catholic priests fear lest their allegiance to Rome might be interpreted, not merely as spiritual allegiance to the Holy See but as political dependence on Italy. They are therefore so much at pains to clear themselves of any such imputation that they are easily prone to fall into the opposite extreme, and this may sometimes make them appear to be pan-Ethiopian, anti-Italian—even, indeed, anti-European—to those who fail to understand the reason for their attitude.

Yet none of these small temporary difficulties can shake my firm conviction that the best hope for the future of Abyssinian Christianity lies with the Catholics of the Ethiopian Rite, a branch of the living tree and therefore capable of growth and development. But though the people they have to win are full of fervent faith, and they have not to contend with the paralysis of indifference, they have still a long and arduous road to travel before they succeed in breaking down the obstinate traditionalism of Abyssinia.

SIMONE WEIL

By STANLEY GODMAN

WHEN Simone Weil died of pulmonary tuberculosis and starvation in the Grosvenor Sanatorium, Ashford, Kent, in August 1943, at the age of thirty-four, she was quite unknown outside the immediate circle of her family and friends. Practically the whole of her literary work (in her lifetime she only published a few articles on classical subjects) has appeared posthumously and we owe a great debt to the devotion of her friends Gustave Thibon and Père Perrin, O.P., which has made the publication of her four books possible. To them too we owe our knowledge of her no less astonishing life, though the time has not yet arrived for the full-scale biography which would provide the basis for a more adequate study of this enigmatic figure. What follows will, it is hoped, be regarded merely as an interim attempt to introduce the main outlines of her life and thought, necessary perhaps as none of her works has appeared in English so far.

Simone Weil was born in Paris in 1909 of well-to-do Jewish parents and graduated as *agrégé de philosophie* at the Ecole Normale Supérieure at the early age of twenty-two after a scholastic and academic career of outstanding brilliance. Even as a child she showed that determination to share the sufferings and hardships of the poor which marked and tormented her whole life. In the cold of winter she refused to wear stockings 'in order to be like the poor'. She scorned the material comforts of her home life, and as soon as she began to earn her own living as a teacher in the lycée of Le Puy she only retained for herself the equivalent of the unemployment dole, distributing the rest to the unemployed and the needy. She even worked on the roads breaking stones with the unemployed, which was the condition for the receipt of 'benefit'. On 'pay-day' she was besieged by her protégés and the 'eccentricities' of her charity caused much concern to her respectable friends and employers. The latter even threatened her with dismissal if she continued to behave so unbecomingly. '*Monsieur l'inspecteur,*'

she replied, 'I have always regarded dismissal as the normal crowning of my career.'

She gave time as well as money to the unemployed, joining in their card games (*belote*) and giving them free lessons. (Despite her extraordinary erudition she was always ready to teach anybody—in London in 1943 she lavished her attention on her landlady's little girl, a child who had fallen behind at school, and when she was working on Gustave Thibon's farm she spent her evenings reading Plato with him in the original Greek and giving instruction in philosophy and mathematics—much of it quite above their heads, but they never said so!—to her farm companions.)

In 1934 she decided to throw in her lot even more directly with the labouring class, obtained a year's leave from school and entered the Renault factory in Paris as a *fraiseuse* (enlarging drill-holes). She took a room in a working-class district and lived entirely on her earnings in the factory.

It was this contact with misery [she wrote later] that killed my youth.

The misery of others entered my flesh and soul. Nothing separated me from it, for I had really forgotten my past and expected no future, finding it difficult to imagine any possibility of surviving this weariness . . . what I underwent there marked me in such a lasting manner that even today (1942) when a human being speaks to me without brutality I cannot help feeling there is something wrong. I received there for ever the brand of slavery.

After the 'factory year' she contracted pleurisy and her parents sent her to Portugal to convalesce. With her body and soul 'in pieces' she spent some time alone in a small Portuguese fishing village, 'itself very poverty-stricken too', and was overwhelmed by the 'indescribably sad singing' of the fisherwomen as they made their way to church on the night of the Patronal Festival. 'It was there that I suddenly attained the certainty that Christianity is par excellence the religion of slaves; that slaves, including myself, can do no other than adhere to it.' In 1937 she spent 'two marvellous days' at Assisi. There alone in the twelfth-century chapel of Santa Maria degli Angeli, an 'incomparable marvel of purity', something stronger than herself forced her to kneel for the first time in her life. In the following year she spent ten days, from Palm Sunday to Easter Tuesday, at Solesmes.

I had [she writes in 1942] intense headaches, every sound hurt me, but by an extreme effort of concentration I was able to leave

this miserable flesh, to leave it to suffer on its own, heaped up in its corner, and to find a pure and perfect joy in the unheard of beauty of the singing and the words. This experience helped me better to understand the possibility of loving the Divine love through misery and suffering. It goes without saying that in the course of the offices the thought of Christ's Passion entered into me once and for all.

There she met a young English Catholic who first gave her an idea of the 'supernatural virtue of the sacraments' and introduced her to the English metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. Later on she discovered George Herbert's poem 'Love', learnt it by heart, and whenever the attacks of headache were at their worst recited it to herself

applying my whole attention to it and cleaving with all my soul to the tenderness which it contains. I imagined that I was reciting it merely as a beautiful poem but, all unknown to me, the recitation had the virtue of a prayer. It was in the course of one of these recitations that Christ Himself came down and took hold of me.

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lacked anything.

'A guest,' I answered, 'worthy to be here.'
Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, the ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on Thee.'
Love took my hand, and smiling, did reply,
'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord, but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'who bore the blame?'
'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
So I did sit and eat.

In my cogitations on the insolubility of the problem of God [she writes], I had not foreseen the possibility of a real contact, here below, from person to person, between a human being and God. . . . But in this sudden seizure of me by Christ, neither the senses nor the imagination had any part; through suffering I merely felt the presence of a love analagous to the love one reads in the smile of a beloved face.

Never having read the mystics, it was evident to her that she had not 'fabricated this absolutely unexpected contact'. It was after that experience of personal contact with Christ Himself that she felt that Plato is a mystic and that the whole of the *Iliad* is 'bathed with Christian light' and that Dionysos and Osiris 'are in a certain manner Christ Himself'. In the spring of 1940 she read the *Bhagavat-Gita* and felt that 'we owe to religious truth something quite different from the adherence which we give to a beautiful poem, a kind of adherence which is categorical in quite a different way'. But it also confirmed her in her resolve never to offer herself for baptism and she admits (in the letter to Père Perrin which contains the 'spiritual autobiography' from which we have been quoting) that if she had not met him she would never have come to think of baptism as a 'practical problem' at all.

It was in June 1941 that, having been forced to give up her teaching on account of the anti-Jewish legislation then introduced into France, she came to Marseilles and met Père Perrin. She asked him to put her in touch with a farmer who might be willing to take her on as an ordinary farmhand, and Père Perrin wrote to his friend Gustave Thibon. After some initial hesitation due to fears that as a Jewess she might not be suitable for farm work and even less so as a highly educated 'intellectual', Thibon agreed to take her on for a time. 'A certain curiosity made me change my mind.'

First impressions were not favourable. She wore him out with her 'interminable conversation in an inflexible and monotonous voice' and, to begin with, they agreed about nothing. On the other hand, as they became more intimately acquainted with each other the relationship became warm and deep. 'She gained enormously by being known in an atmosphere of intimacy.' Thibon sums up his impression of her by saying: 'I had never met such familiarity with the mysteries of religion in any other human being . . . the word "supernatural" had never seemed so bursting with reality as in contact with her.'

She did not stay long in Monsieur Thibon's house for she found his home too comfortable. She wanted to share the rigours of farm life at its worst, not at its most agreeable, so she moved to an old dilapidated farmhouse owned by Thibon's step-parents, still suffering badly from headaches and the after-effects of the pleurisy contracted in 1934. 'She worked the soil with inflexible

energy and was often content for food with blackberries gathered on wayside bushes.' She sent half her ration cards to political prisoners and only rarely 'deigned to eat' at all with the Thibons. Yet throughout this time she expounded Plato to her host every evening, though she 'put just the same love into teaching the first rudiments of arithmetic to some backward "gamin" in the village.' Her extraordinary erudition was so profoundly assimilated with the rest of her being that, Thibon says, 'it was hardly distinguishable from the expression of her interior life'.

After some weeks she left Thibon's farm altogether to work on another where she was quite unknown, 'unknown among the unknown', there to share to the full the lot of the 'real agricultural worker'. For more than a month she shared in the grape-harvest, working with 'heroic continuity' and always 'refusing to knock off before any of the hardy peasants all around her'. 'One day' [she wrote afterwards], 'I asked myself whether I was not dead and had not fallen into hell without noticing it and if hell did not consist in one eternal grape-harvest.'

On 17 May, 1942, her parents having decided to leave for America, she herself left Marseilles for Morocco, spending two weeks in the camp of Ain Seba, near Casablanca, and arriving in New York towards the end of June. She was there until 10 November, 1942, leaving then for London. Her great hope was to be sent *en mission* to France to take an active part in the Resistance movement, but her ill-health and her Jewish features decided the authorities against this venture and she spent the last months of her life in London working for Monsieur Maurice Schumann. She was determined, however, to share the privations of her fellow-countrymen as far as possible and reduced her diet, even in rationed war-time Britain, to the lowest level of rations in occupied France. In less than ten months she died, having literally starved herself to death. The special treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis which was given her in hospital in London and in the last week of her life in the Grosvenor Sanatorium in Ashford was an additional trial to her. 'She hated to be in a privileged position, receiving special treatment. She only felt really at ease on the lowest rung of the social ladder, mingled with the mass of the poor and the disinherited' (Thibon). The Medical Superintendent of the Sanatorium writes: 'Unfortunately she was a difficult patient to treat and would not accept our help.'

Of her work as a whole Thibon has said:

She can only be understood on the level on which she herself spoke. Her work is addressed, if not to souls as stripped bare of self as her own, at least to those who preserve in the depths of their souls an aspiration towards the pure goodness to which she devoted her life and her death. Far from claiming to construct a personal system, she desired with all her strength to be absent from her work. Her one desire was not to form a screen between God and man—to disappear 'so that the Creator and the creature may exchange their secrets'. Some of her writing attains that impersonal resonance which is the mark of supreme inspiration.

When she left Marseilles in May 1942 she left a number of notebooks with M. Thibon and from these he compiled the volume of aphorisms entitled *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*, published by Plon in 1947. Here are to be found the germs of the leading ideas and themes which she developed in the series of letters to Père Perrin which he published under the title *L'Attente de Dieu* (Editions du Vieux Colombier, Paris, 1950) and in the American and London notebooks published by an unnamed editor under the title *La Connaissance Surnaturelle* (Gallimard, 1950, in the Collection *Espoir*, dirigée par Albert Camus), whilst one section at least (on the uprooting influences of Israel and Europe) underlies the great sociological work which she wrote in London at the request of the French authorities and which appeared in 1949 under the title *L'Enracinement* (Gallimard).

Perhaps the key to her life and thought are to be found more than anywhere in one of the early assertions in *La Pesanteur et la Grâce*: 'There are only two moments of perfect nudity and purity in life: birth and death.' Between those two points man is weighed down to earth by the burden of the things of this world, by the gravity of his own 'having'. 'Man has no Being, only Having.' The world of Being breaks in on the world of Having but it cannot be attained by human effort. 'In all things only what comes to us from outside, as if by a gift of fate, without our having sought it, is pure joy. Real good can only come from without, never by our own effort.' It is possible to know the will of God only by making an inward silence, a silence of pure obedience 'in which one thinks with one's whole soul and *without words* "Thy will be done".' 'Christianity talks too much of holy things.' Christ hanging silent on the Cross brings us nearer to the Being of God than the words of the Sermon on the Mount. 'The Cross of Christ is the sole gateway to knowledge.'

Authentic religion, like authentic love and authentic poetry, is conditioned by 'absolute concentration on the real', by an act of contemplation beyond the intellectual attitudes of affirmation and denial. 'When one is listening to Bach, the intelligence finds nothing to affirm or deny, it simply feeds on the music. Similarly the mysteries of the Faith are degraded if they are made the object of affirmation or denial, since they should be the object of contemplation.' *Pure* reality is that which is entirely beyond our reach and that is why the Past is the 'image of eternal supernatural reality'. This links up directly with one of the dominant themes of her sociology as expounded in *L'Enracinement*: 'of all the needs of the human spirit none is more vital than the Past'. Again, the startling motif in the earlier work: 'The workers need poetry more than bread' recurs, fully orchestrated, we may say, in the sociology.

In the volume to which he has given the title *L'Attente de Dieu*, Père Perrin of Marseilles has published a series of six letters and a number of papers (notably a long one on 'Forms of the Implicit Love of God') together with a valuable introduction in which he attempts to assess her significance. In the first place her life bears witness to the cost of truth. 'Truth cannot be bought with ideas and speeches, but only with one's own self.' 'It was enough to have met Simone to know that only the Truth counted for her.' Secondly, the austerity of her life was not due simply to a lack of interest in the things that have no spiritual value but to a real concern to share in human suffering, and above all, in the Cross of Christ. For her the Cross of Christ was the most convincing proof and the most dazzling revelation of the divinity of Christ. Thirdly, he points to the integrity of her life, her refusal to demand from others what she was not prepared to demand a hundredfold from herself, the harmony between her actual life and her ideas.

She herself described her conception of her 'mission' in the first of the letters which Père Perrin has published (19 January, 1942).

It is my essential need and, I think I may say, my vocation, to pass among men and among different human milieux, blending myself with them, taking on their colour, disappearing amongst them, so that they may show themselves to me as they are, undisguised. I want to know them in order to love them as they are. For if I do not love them as they are, it is not they whom I love and my love is not true. . . . I do not think that I would enter a religious order under any circumstances, in order not to separate myself from ordinary people by wearing a different habit.

In the second letter she discusses her fear of the Church 'as a collective thing', her anxiety not to surrender to the influence of 'collective things', which she felt would involve a loss of personal integrity. In the third, written on the eve of her departure from Marseilles, she stresses that the very last reason for her departure was to escape from suffering and danger. 'Until now we have lived very quietly here. If this quietness were to vanish after my departure it would be horrible for me. If I were certain that things were going to take a turn for the worse, I think I should stay here.'

On 15 May, 1942, she wrote the 'spiritual autobiography' from which we have already quoted at some length. Summing up her past spiritual experience she wrote that it would be a betrayal of the truth, 'of the aspect of the truth which I can perceive' if she were to leave the spot where she had stood since her birth, 'at the intersection of Christianity and everything that is not Christianity. I have always stayed on the threshold of the Church, without moving, on this very spot.' She asked Père Perrin to believe that it was an 'authentic vocation' which prevented her entering the Church.¹

In the sixth letter, written from Casablanca in May 1942, she wrote:

It is in misery itself that the mercy of God is radiant . . . at the centre of its inconsolable bitterness . . . one ends by touching something which is no longer despair and which is not joy, but which is the *central essence*, pure, non-sensible, common to both joy and suffering, which is the very love of God. One knows then that joy is the sweetness of contact with the love of God, that despair is the wound inflicted by this same contact and that the contact itself is all-important, not the mode in which it is experienced. This knowledge of the presence of God does not comfort . . . does not cure the mutilation of the soul. But one knows for certain that the love of God for us is the very substance of the soul's bitterness and mutilation.

Père Perrin also publishes a long paper 'On the use of academic studies with a view to the love of God' which she wrote for

¹ Of her failure to enter the Church Max Picard writes: 'It seems to me that it was God's will that she should not become a convert. Simone Weil was one of God's favourites, wholly marked out by Him and if He did not give her the grace of Baptism, He well knew why. She had the grace that she lived, suffered and died as one baptized though unbaptized, indeed in a way that few of those who are baptized succeed in living, suffering and dying. As she, more Christian than most Christians, did not receive Baptism, perhaps God wanted to extend the bounds of Christianity to unbelievers, in *partibus infidelium*; by taking possession of Simone Weil, He took possession of all other non-Christians.'

the Catholic students of Montpellier. Her thesis, developed with great skill, is that 'even apparently useless and fruitless study will bear fruit later on in prayer. All study is a road towards holiness.' The concentration that is the essential requirement of the intellectual as of the spiritual life 'consists in suspending thought, leaving it empty and penetrable by the object . . . thought must be empty, waiting, seeking nothing, simply *ready to receive* the object which is about to penetrate it in its naked truth'. 'Every scholarly exercise is therefore like a sacrament.' This concentration which consists in the 'suspension of thought' is also the secret of the 'fullness of love for one's neighbour'. To know that our neighbour exists 'not as an example of a social category but as a person, it is first necessary to look at him with a look in which the soul empties itself of all its own content, in order to *receive* into itself the being which it is looking at, as it is in the fullness of its truth'. 'The concentration acquired in Latin translation and geometry, for example, can make us capable, later on, of giving just the help needed to save a desperate man.'

In another paper, written in the spring of 1942, on 'Despair and the Love of God', she writes that it is not suffering but the despair, the hopelessness that constrained Christ Himself to believe Himself abandoned by the Father, that constitutes the great enigma of human life. This is the despair that makes God 'more absent than light in an utterly dark cell'. If, in that utter darkness the soul ceases to love God, it falls into something almost equivalent to hell. It *must* continue to love, in and through the emptiness and the darkness. The Crucifixion was the ultimate darkness of the 'distance from God' which man experiences as the absence of God, but it was also the 'infinite distance between God and God', the renunciation of God by God, the supreme marvel of His love for man. Our own misery, the result of our distance from God, gives us 'the infinitely precious privilege of participating in this distance between the Son and the Father'. Because of our flesh, it is impossible for God to be perfectly present to us, but He can be almost perfectly absent to us in the depths of despair. 'That is why the Cross is our one and only Hope.' 'With joy alone we could no more become the friends of God than a man becomes a captain merely by studying handbooks of navigation.'

Perhaps the most important, as it is the profoundest, of these papers is the long essay on 'Forms of the Implicit Love of God' written in April 1942. Only a brief summary is possible here. She

deals first with the love of our neighbour. In loving his neighbour, and Simone Weil takes the Good Samaritan as the type of neighbourly love, a man accepts a 'diminution' of his own self, just as God Himself, in the Creation and the Passion, renounces Himself for love of man. The man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho is a heap of 'naked, inert, bleeding flesh', nameless, unknown to anyone—a thing rather than a person. Only one man stops and *looks*, concentrates his whole attention, 'wishes the existence of the other', and in that quality of 'creative attention' he shows a supernatural love, since 'the sympathy of the strong for the weak is against nature'. In human relations, as in art and science, there are two orders; the first is merely an *extension* of self, the second is a renunciation of self, a power of 'attending to the non-existent', of 'creating from nothing'. The Samaritan who stops and looks concentrates on the inert thing before him and creates a living person. 'Wherever suffering humanity is loved for its own sake there God is present.'

Secondly Simone Weil deals with the love of the beauty and order of the external world as another form of the 'implicit love of God'. 'Real, direct contact with the beauty of the world is like a sacrament.' But the supreme contact with the external world comes only through physical labour.

Anyone who has had his limbs broken by the effort of a day's work, of a day in which he has been subjected to the material world, carries the reality of the universe in his flesh like a thorn. The difficulty for him is to contemplate and to love; if he succeeds in doing so, then what he loves is reality itself. This is the immense privilege that God has reserved for His poor. But they are hardly ever aware of the fact. No one tells them. The excess of fatigue, financial worries and the lack of true culture prevent them from seeing it. [A point that she takes up in more detail in *L'Enracinement*.]

Thirdly she deals with the 'love of religious practices'. In the formal acts of religion 'there is only silence, immobility and waiting upon God', a passive obedience which is modelled forth supremely in the Crucifixion. 'Passive activity is the highest of all activities . . . we cannot take even one small step towards heaven, but if we contemplate heaven for long enough, God comes down and raises us up.' The Gospel is the good news not of man's discovery of God but of God's descent to man. Like the slave listening near the door, to open it as soon as the master knocks, man must be ready to die of exhaustion rather than change his attitude

of attentive immobility. Such apparently negative 'waiting upon God' is in fact more intense than all active research.

The theme of the sociological work written in London in 1942-3 and published in 1949 under the title *L'Enracinement* is, as the title suggests, what the author calls 'perhaps the most important and most neglected need of the human spirit', the individual and above all the communal need for roots; roots in social, geographical, historical tradition; roots, in a word, in the past. 'The Past is the most vital need of the human spirit.'

Two objects bound up with the particular time in which the work was written inspired its composition. It is, on the one hand, an attempt to explain the collapse of France in 1940 ('a tree whose roots are almost wholly eaten up falls at the first shock . . . in Germany uprooting assumed an expansionistic, aggressive form, in France it was expressed in lethargy and stupor') and, on the other, it is an examination of the steps which she believed needed to be taken to restore the health of the French spirit. The diseases which she analyses were actual when she wrote but they are no less actual today, and her recommendations are as applicable to mankind as a whole as they were to her own country in particular.

This is a tract for the times, '*un véritable traité de civilisation*', as Albert Camus has called it. A human being has roots by real participation in a society which preserves alive certain treasures of the past and a certain presentiment of the future. He needs, above all, to *receive* practically the whole of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life from the family and society into which he is born and to have 'multiple roots' in the past. He should not have to start from scratch, he should have a firm base on which to ground his life. This does not mean that he should not be open to outside 'influences but they should merely make his own life more intense. When a painter of real value enters an art gallery his originality is *confirmed*, not shaken and destroyed.' Education today, however, is, even in the countryside, often a process of exposure to extraneous influences rather than a strengthening of innate, traditional values. The peasant-child is often 'torn from the universe surrounding him'. (Cf. Gustave Thibon: 'Modern individualism, by separating man from the supra-individual ensemble of realities, from soil and locality, from the personal crafts and professions, has weakened and impoverished instead of strengthening and confirming the individual.')

A social system must be profoundly diseased when the peasant

who works the earth thinks that, if he is a peasant, it is 'merely because he is not intelligent enough to become a teacher'. There should at least be a 'descending movement' to balance the 'ascending movement' from the 'working' to the intellectual class. It should be equally possible in a healthy society for the son of a Cabinet minister to become a farmhand as for the son of a farmhand to become a Cabinet minister. The sickness of modern society is that all the impetus is behind the 'upward movement', with the consequent weakening of the bases of society, and, when the process has become irreparable, the disintegration and decomposition of society. (Simone Weil sees the events in 1940 in France as the supreme example of that in modern times.) In an organically healthy society 'the soldier admires the general and the general admires the soldier, both are happy and proud, the one to be under the fire of the enemy, the other to be privileged to direct the battle'.

Turning to the unhappiness of the worker in the huge, anonymous factory (she speaks of course from the experience of her year in the Renault factory in Paris), she argues that too little attention is paid by the back-room-boy technicians to the needs of the workers. There should be more consultation between the trade unions and the technicians to prevent the one-sided concentration on the needs of the machine. If the needs of the worker as a person were considered more 'the whole technique of production would be gradually transformed'. The first reform would be the splitting up of the inhumanly huge undertaking into a number of smaller undertakings. Some of the work might well be done at home or in small workshops where a man might show his wife around and where his children might drop in after school and 'learn to work beside their father at an age when work is the most exciting game'. Instead of the nightmare caused by the school-leaver's sudden break from the life of the small community of family and school to the impersonal life of the large-size factory the child would come to the work of the adult world as to something 'bright with the poetry of a marvellous game'.

She attributes much of the weakness of France in 1940 to the neglect of apprenticeship in the pre-war years. In 1934-5 (the year she worked in Renault's) it was impossible to find skilled workers for the aircraft factories and France paid the price of this neglect when the war came. She upbraids the trade unions for being more concerned with raising the wages of the already well-paid than

with improving the conditions of the underpaid factory worker, especially the adolescents, the women and the immigrants. They follow the 'usual tendency of human nature not to bother about the underdog'. She is also much concerned with the problem of the education and culture of working-class youth. What is needed is not a vulgarization of the culture of the intellectual class. 'Culture today is an instrument handled by teachers for the manufacture of teachers who will in their turn manufacture more teachers.' This devitalized culture is itself in need of the stimulating contact with working-class life. 'Students at the universities should mix with the workers in field and factory.'

We know that she was not content to state this as a theory but went 'through the mill' of field and factory life herself. From that experience she learnt that culture must grow out of the conditions of field and factory life, it cannot be imposed varnish-like from above. There should be more chance, for example, for the peasant or farm worker to enjoy the beauty of his surroundings instead of being so exhausted by his daily toil that he becomes insensitive to the sacramental beauty of the natural world.

Again, she was convinced that the training of the country teacher should be 'totally different from that of the town teacher'. He should work on a farm himself, for at least a year, anonymously, to learn to know and love the countryside and its people from inside. There should also be special training for the country clergy. Too often their lives are lived apart from their people and so the peasantry becomes alienated from the Church. Farm workers should be made to feel proud of the part played by the life of the fields in the Parables of Jesus and of the sacred function of bread and wine. They should feel that Christianity belongs especially to them. Above all there was a need in our age of a new conception of work, not as a 'kind of prison' but as a mode of contact with the reality of this world and the world of spirit. 'The real mission of our age is the construction of a civilization based on the spirituality of work.'

The last work of Simone Weil's to be published consists of the notebooks which she kept first in America (between June and November 1942) and then in London (November 1942–August 1943), published under the title *La Connaissance Surnaturelle* (Gallimard, 1950, 337 pp.). Unlike the compact and connected series of letters and papers published in *L'Attente de Dieu*, this collection of diary entries is extremely varied and diffuse in theme and treat-

ment and almost impossible to summarize. Wisely, perhaps, no attempt has been made to edit the material. On the other hand it might be possible to publish a selection of the more connected passages for the general reader as much of the material can be of interest only to the close student of the sources and obiter dicta of Simone Weil. We shall confine ourselves here to drawing attention to a few of the major themes and more important entries.

Perhaps the leitmotif is what she calls the 'self-abdication of God'. Creation, as well as the Passion, is a self-emptying of God. 'For God the Creation consisted not in an extension of Himself but in a withdrawal of Himself. Creation, Passion and Eucharist all proceed from the same movement of withdrawal, the movement of Love.' Thus man's supernatural, self-renouncing, self-emptying love of his neighbour is an imitation of God's self-renouncing love of man. 'That in man which is the very *image of God* is connected with the fact of his being a person, but it is not the person itself. It is the faculty of renouncing the person.' What better proof is there than Time itself that Creation is God's abdication, she asks in a later and most penetrating passage on the relation between God¹ and Time (pp. 90-93). Time is the patience, the silent waiting of God.

He waits like a beggar, motionless and silent, before someone who is perhaps going to give him a piece of bread . . . Time is the waiting of God, of God Who begs for our love . . . Such humility in waiting makes us like God. God is pure Goodness. That is why He waits in silence. Goodness that is only good can only *be*. Humility is a participation in the waiting of God. The perfect soul awaits the Good with as much silence and immobility as God Himself. Christ nailed on the Cross is the perfect image of the Father. God and humanity are like two lovers who made a mistake about their meeting-place. Both are there before the time arranged but both are in a different place. They both wait and wait and wait. The man stands nailed to the spot for all time. But the woman becomes distracted and impatient. Woe betide her if she gives up hope and goes off elsewhere. The Crucifixion is the image of this fixity of God. We must imitate the waiting and the humility of God . . . everything we attain by our own will and effort and everything external circumstances give or refuse us is absolutely valueless.

¹ There is truth, of course, in Karl Pflieger's observation (*Wort und Wahrheit*, May 1950, and in personal correspondence with the present writer) that Simone's conception of Time is more Buddhist than specifically Christian. 'She fought her way to the Mystery of the Cross but not to that of the Incarnation. . . . For Christianity Time is wholly different from the Eternity of God but not from His Presence: the Incarnation and all the sacraments of Christ are the presence of the supernatural in the natural.' On the other hand, there is evidence, not least in *L'Attente de Dieu*, that she came very near to an understanding of this truth.

She sees the gesture of kneeling as the perfect symbol of self-surrender, of waiting upon God and of exposure to all the dangers of the world. 'To kneel is to present oneself for a whipping, for the possible loss of one's head and for any kind of punishment, to put oneself in the most convenient position for the sword. At the same time it is an approach to the very source of life.'

Turning again to the theme of the spirituality of work, she draws up what she calls a 'spiritual calendar for the peasant's year'. The peasant's flesh, expended in labour, is transformed into bread. Consecration makes this bread the flesh of Christ. 'Pray that God may make our flesh the flesh of Christ so that all the unhappy may eat thereof.'

In her very last recorded thoughts, written in pencil in the last days of her life, she dwelt again on the spirituality of food, of the special foods which mark the spiritual seasons of the Christian year:

For man living in this world, matter is the filter, the sieve, the universal criterion of reality. There is an alliance between matter and real emotions: hence the importance of meals on solemn occasions, festivals, family reunions and even the reunion of two friends and the importance of special foods, of goose and iced chestnuts and Christmas pudding, of Easter eggs and a thousand local and regional folk traditions (most of which have disappeared). The joy and the spiritual significance of the festival is *in* the special dish appointed for the festival.

For all her austerity there was a warm, homely and affectionate side to Simone's nature and it shines through these last recorded words of her life. She was, Gustave Thibon says, 'a charming companion' and to know her, though only through her books, is inevitably to love her.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF CHARLES DU BOS

By ROBERT SPEAIGHT

WHEN Charles Du Bos died at Celle St. Cloud in the late summer of 1939, all who knew him felt that one of the last great Europeans had passed away. The war which followed would have rendered many of his preoccupations remote and even irrelevant, but he himself was a pathetic reminder of the values for which it was supposed to be fought. Although his universe was a private one, he was not unconcerned for the welfare of his fellow-men. Returning to America in the autumn of 1938, he opened the window of his ivory tower and discussed with intelligence, and even with clairvoyance, the moral issues of Munich. This brief meditation, published under the title of *Commentaire*, is well worth the reading, for it shows the subjectivism of Du Bos in a new light altogether. He was very far from the heresies of *littérature engagée*, understanding that the writer's first duty was to the word, but he saw that the civilization whose delicacies he prized so dearly must have a moral basis. He could describe the spiritual malady, although he would not presume to suggest the political cure. If he held himself beyond politics, it was because, for him, the battle was engaged on a deeper level. The confrontation of fleets and armies, though they might arrest his sympathetic attention, never distracted him from the dialogue in his soul—a dialogue in which he was at once spectator and participant.

Much has been written about Du Bos since his death, but this is of less importance than the publication, year by year, of the *Journal* which he scrupulously kept from 1921 onwards. To this Madame Du Bos has now added the *Correspondence with André Gide*. Four closely packed volumes only take us up to 1928, but we already have enough material to make our mental picture of Charles Du Bos; to become, in a sense, his intimates if we did not

know him in his lifetime; to feel the pressure of his arm and to hear his grave voice discoursing to us, in nearly perfect English, of Pascal or of Proust; to watch him, lost in prayer, approach the altar at his morning Mass. 'With hands folded and tense, and his fine eyes, moist with tears, fixed upon the Host'—this is how François Mauriac evokes for us his friend. And this is how I remember him myself in the Chapel of St. Mary's College, Indiana.

Afterwards we breakfasted together, and the conversation ranged around the morning's epistle, which was the story of Susanna and the Elders. We agreed that this was one of the great short stories of the world, and it led Du Bos on to the theme of lust, which he had discussed at such a profound level in the *Dialogue avec André Gide*. He quoted, once again, the Shakespearian sonnet 'The expense of spirit in a waste of shame', because this illustrated for him a truth which owed nothing to Jansenist repugnances—that the life of the senses had a tragic content. It was his perception of this which brought him close to Mauriac, with whom he had little else in common, and separated him from Gide who, like himself, was an aesthete and *être de dialogue*. A novel like Mauriac's *Désert De L'Amour* proceeded from an experience not dissimilar from Du Bos', and Du Bos dedicated to it one of his finest essays. He saw that in Mauriac only two things counted—God and the sexual life; and he saw that God was necessary because the flesh remained fundamentally unappeased. The more we yielded to it, the more voracious it became. Here Du Bos quotes the extraordinary passage at the end of *Le Désert De L'Amour*—an outcry which is the key to the whole of Mauriac.

'Tout sert la passion; le jeûne l'exaspère, l'assouvissement la fortifie, notre vertu la tient éveillée, l'irrite; elle nous terrifie, nous fascine, mais si nous cédon, notre lâcheté ne sera jamais à la mesure de son exigence.'

For Mauriac the central proof of the existence of a personal God was the poverty of alternative satisfactions; these counterfeits demanded a true currency. But if Du Bos' religious psychology was in this respect similar to Mauriac's, it was in other respects both different and richer. He approached the same truth by avenues which Mauriac would have feared, or been indifferent, to tread. Du Bos had not yet returned to the practice of Catholicism when he wrote his essay on *Le Désert De L'Amour*, and he suggests the reason for keeping his distance. He saw an antithesis between spirituality and Catholicism, which the study of Mauriac had brought home to him. By the spiritual world Du Bos meant

the world of Pater and Plotinus, of Joubert, Novalis and Nietzsche, and to this world Mauriac was a stranger. But it was still possible for man to live by these secular lights, if he preserved the integrity of his moral being and cultivated the intellectual virtues. It was only when he had deliberately put out the lights, that grace, as Mauriac and Catholicism understood it, became necessary to show the way. For Du Bos the spiritual world, in which he moved so easily, was at the same time in our hands and at our mercy, as fragile and seductive as its archetype was solid and forbidding.

André Gide, on the other hand, was perfectly at home in this humanist half-way house of spiritual and intellectual contemplation. The contemplatives actually found their cloister when Paul Desjardins restored the Abbey of Pontigny and instituted the 'Decades' which brought together into friendly discussion men who could only have knelt before the altar of the Unknown God. Pontigny was in fact, if not in name, a revival of the Athenian cult, and Du Bos, though he was less agnostic than most, was its principal hierophant. Pontigny is hardly conceivable today; it depended on an intellectual tolerance, not untouched by dilettantism, which is no longer in force or fashion. For men like Du Bos and Gide dialogue was essentially an exchange; it had the character of a Platonic symposium, where everyone was open to argument. Knowledge was a common heritage acquired by conversation, whether in person or on paper. It was not inculcated by people ramming their opinions down other people's throats, or by two adversaries, petrified in their arguments as mediaeval knights were petrified in their armour, holding positions which could not be abandoned without dishonour. In the Heraclitan flux of Pontigny, all that mattered was that the stream of discussion should flow on, fed by the tributaries of individual statements. This Mississippi was still a long way from the sea.

How far is perhaps indicated by an entry from the Journal of 1928. Du Bos is wandering round the district of Paris which stretches from the Gardens of the Trocadéro to Auteuil; it is not for most of us a part of the city particularly rich in souvenirs, but it moves Du Bos to a flood of recollection. It was here that he had 'most peaceably and luxuriously meditated'; here that 'so many grey note-books had been begun, sitting on this or that bench, either on my way to Bergson, Gide and Boylesve, or on my way back from them'; here that he had walked with his wife, reading some verses of English poetry, or Baudelaire, or Lamartine, and

carrying the books which he brought out 'like little dogs to make them take the air'—Joubert, Vauvenargues, Henry James, and Pater.

The whole passage reminded me of our conversation at breakfast; how we left Shakespeare and Susanna and the Elders and how, in reply to my question as to whether the religious instinct were more prominent in James or in Proust, Du Bos had answered that, in his opinion, Proust was the more authentically religious of the two. 'For James,' he observed, 'the country-house was the temple.' Then we moved out into the corridor, and taking my arm, he said with an accent of melancholy fervour, 'This conversation, my dear Speaight, this is on the other side of the Atlantic.' Beyond us, through the window, the snow-bound, similar landscape stretched towards Michigan City and the bitter lake. I had never known Du Bos on his home ground; at Celle St. Cloud or on the Ile St. Louis. But I could imagine the sophomores gaping at his elucidations of Pascal, and I could not help exclaiming to myself: '*Quel drôle de mise en scène!*' Before breakfast, at the perfectly recited Dialogue Mass, one had no sensation of exile; but out there, beyond the trees, was the campus of Notre Dame, and although the University of Notre Dame has all the virtues of muscular Catholicism, it is the last place on earth for a *spirituel*. It would be hypocritical to pretend that Du Bos was happy there; but the fact that he was there at all illustrates the triumph of a life which was in so many other, inessential, ways a failure. And this triumph was the integration of what he had suspected to be separate—the marrying of spirituality and Catholicism.

Already, in 1922, Du Bos understood the danger of his temperament; he had learnt that, as he had learnt so much else, from Pascal. Pascal, whom he regarded as the most universal expression of the French mind although he could not be considered typical of the French genius, had taken care not to sacrifice everything to the *esprit de finesse*. He had known the peril of translating secondary into primary ends. This might easily lead to a 'spiritual frivolity which could become incurable', and which 'consisted in treating each subtle question in and for itself, in making a collection of spiritual *bibelots*'. With the man totally deprived of the meta-physical sense 'a moment always arrived when there was nothing whatever to do'. This is the common temptation of the literary critic, who is seldom troubled by philosophical considerations. But Du Bos, for all his passion for books, was hardly a literary

critic in the formally accepted meaning of the term. What interested him was the man behind the writer, and all his discussion of literature is an exercise in psychological sympathy. His mind was eminently undogmatic; as Gide remarked, he was not an *être d'affirmation*. The title he gave to his collected essays—*Approximation*—gives the measure of his approach. He stalked his subjects—listening, probing, penetrating, and often walking arm in arm. And this power of sympathy, which ensured the justice and accuracy of his comment, made him also a formidable antagonist.

Du Bos had only to a limited degree the characteristics of the French intelligence. The loudly vaunted '*clarté*' he dismissed as the claptrap of superficial minds. But there was another aspect of the French genius which tempted and troubled him at the same time. The voice of French classicism, speaking through Valéry, had objected to Pascal 'Why always discuss the insoluble?' Du Bos, Pascalian as he was, nevertheless saw reason in the complaint, more especially as it had Valéry behind it. It was the most pertinent explanation of his disagreement with the French spirit, whose greatness was 'never to touch a thing unless it brings some new element of solution. But the other side of the medal reminds us that since everything profound in life has its way of being insoluble, one is thrown back upon a skilful, delicate, exquisite handling of the surfaces which dazzled me for years, still affords me occasional delight, but which nevertheless I have outgrown.'

The other danger of introspection was an involuntary abuse of spiritual pathos; but between those who resisted it, like the French classicists, and those who gave way to it, like the Russians and the Germans, with Pascal, Péguy and Baudelaire, the latter were incomparably the more profound and Du Bos was temperamentally akin to them. The English, too, were of their company, and Du Bos, writing in 1922, could claim that English literature 'is the very core of my spiritual life'. This is so manifest in everything he wrote about certain English authors—Keats, Hardy, Shelley, George Eliot, Coventry Patmore—that we are moved to ask how this religious romantic came to accept the necessity of revelation.

It may be argued that Du Bos had been brought up in the Catholic religion and that his return to it was only a matter of time; that his spirituality was the legacy of a sacramental past; that it was so constant and profound in him that we really have right to speak of a conversion at all; that religious observance did

no more than consecrate his spiritual and aesthetic preoccupations. And there was nothing dramatic about his later acceptance of Catholicism. He had feared that his intellect—by which he meant much more than his instrument of ratiocination—might henceforward have to go in blinkers; but no reversal of values was necessary for one who had always lived with Augustine and Thomas à Kempis. The Faith was the completion, not the contradiction, of his spirituality; and a careful reading of the Journals shows to what an extent a profound culture may prepare the soul for grace. Nevertheless, a change, a deepening, is evident. But this declares itself more particularly in the practice of the Christian life than in the act of adherence to a doctrine which had probably never been quite disbelieved in. The difference, although it still remains a difference within a continuity, is not between what Charles Du Bos believed at one time and another. It is between the man he was and the man he through mortification and humility became.

Du Bos was certainly among the great humanists of his time, but more than most he was an *anima naturaliter Christiana*. There was no opposition of rationalist pride, nor for all his attachment to certain romantic writers, of romantic emotionalism, to keep him from the submissions and liberations of the Christian life. In fact, he refused the categories of the romantic and the classical; and if he was a romantic, he was a romantic *dompté*. Where he parted company from the average humanist was in his rejection of the ideal of equilibrium. 'That is the word, the condition, that I simply won't have at any price.' He wondered, indeed, whether the desire for it was not subtly diabolical. He had been in conversation with Gide, who had remarked that the real opposition was between the Greek and the Christian ideals, and Du Bos went on to admit freely that he had not an atom of the Greek in his composition. 'But then what does Goethe mean to you?' Gide had inquired; to which Du Bos had the felicitous reply '*Le plus beau de mes étrangers*.' There were indeed few limits to the hospitality of this extraordinary mind. Only Mozart among musicians strangely failed to move him, and among writers only Rabelais and Molière were rather indignantly shown the door.

But Du Bos knew himself to be incapable of the *gros rire*, and I do not know how far he would have admitted the rights of Comedy on Parnassus. Serious almost to a fault, he saw himself with the clarity, the proportion, which is normally the reward of humour.

'I realize that fundamentally I am a moral and not an intellectual person; a moral person who applies all his powers, and this includes his moral sensibility, to intellectual subjects and preoccupations.' This was at the root of his difference with Gide, whose effort, moral at first, had become increasingly and almost exclusively intellectual. It explains his predisposition, if not to Catholic dogma, at least to Christian ethics. It also suggests the subtle temptation which deflected him, over so many years, from the fulfilment he discovered in Catholicism. He was to speak, as he lay dying at Celle St. Cloud, of the admirations which had enriched his life; the admirations which were necessary if he were to penetrate the mind of a writer or a painter or a musician. He spoke of Augustine from whom he had learnt the secret of detachment. '*Il semble qu'il y ait chez saint Augustin une délicatesse suprême qui l'incite à parachever et comme à caresser par l'expression les choses dont il faut qu'il se détache au moment même qu'il va s'en détacher.*' This detachment which had '*la douceur d'un mouvement floral*' was never tainted with antinomy. He spoke of Bach of whom he had once written that even if the world were to be carried off in some prodigious cataclysm, the music of Bach would still be there, since it was, in Gide's phrase, a '*musique astronomique*', illustrating Traherne's saying that 'Order is the very beauty of beauty.' He spoke of Keats and Botticelli, and then finally of Nietzsche, whom he had once declared to be '*le seul ennemi qui compte*'. Nietzsche was the prophet of the will, and here was the temptation which besets every moralist; to accomplish by effort what can only be accomplished by abdication. It was the temptation to do everything by oneself, against which the whole experience of Christian spirituality protests.

Du Bos was vividly aware of this. His return to religion was essentially a '*réduction à l'unité*', the reconquest of a personality.

Not only [he writes in 1925] have I nothing against religion, but I am, in the depth of my being, the most religious of creatures; I have never been able to do without a personal religion of which the forms varied but of which I am always in the same fundamental need. But I can't admit that only our weaknesses should lead us back to God, and that we should offer Him nothing else. It has always seemed to me that He requires the homage of whatever is strong and lucid in us, of our self-mastery. Of course He wants our weaknesses, but He wants also all our efforts to conquer them; in a word, He wants from us the creatures at once strong and feeble that we naturally are. The depth and wisdom, but also the danger, of

sacramental confession lie in the fact that, *au fond*, Catholic discipline prefers our weakness to our strength. And from its own point of view it is perfectly right, because everything should be founded on humility, and pride is the sin against which Catholicism directs its whole arsenal. But it seems to me here that perhaps they extend unduly the Kingdom of pride and exaggerate the attributes which belong to it. The effort to create oneself by oneself is not necessarily accompanied by pride, because success here is always counter-balanced by failure; and in so far as the soul is naturally fine, it is the failure, and not at all the success, which haunts it.

This important passage lights up for us many shades of difference between the Catholic and the Protestant ethos. Du Bos, who had English blood in him on his mother's side, was qualified, through this and through his profound knowledge of English literature, to understand the latter. He would have distinguished, I think, between pride and self-respect, and he would have felt that Catholicism was altogether too ready to confuse humility and self-contempt. It is always good to be humble, but it is not necessarily good to be humiliated. In the depth of his despair man may feel that it is no use looking upward, and this is the moment when he plunges into the abyss. At no stage of his development could Du Bos conceivably have been called a proud man, nor indeed a strong man either. His admiration for Nietzsche was the tribute of an anti-rationalist, but there was in it also the neurotic need for a force which he knew to be lacking in himself. 'I have always,' he remarked to me, 'had a great sympathy for Coleridge, because when I was a young man I too suffered from weakness of the will.'

If his sensitive moral nature kept him always close to Christianity, it also prevented him over a long period of time from that spontaneous act of love which alone could satisfy his religious instinct. He was too much of a moralist to give rein to the mystical impulse; he was too scrupulous and too self-conscious to let himself go. At Pontigny, in 1924, he feels himself 'almost slightly adverse to mystical states'; the mystical state seems to him much less a Christian than a 'trans-Christian' condition, and then he goes on to define the grandeur of Christianity as having held in equal balance the notion of the absolute and measureless value of the human soul and its salvation, and the notion of the love of one's neighbour. Du Bos had examined elsewhere, in the case of Marcel Arland, what he described as the 'sanctity of a certain sort of egotism', and in Joubert what he called a '*mysticisme profond*,

seeing in both an instrument for the discovery of God; and in this sense he was a saintly egoist himself. But in general he seems to have felt that mysticism was tainted with selfishness. He separates the moral and mystical exigencies of his being, and admits that none of the exaltations he has known can properly be called mystical since they are all 'too penetrated and saturated by morality', and for him the mystical state was essentially trans-moral. Does there not perhaps exist, he asks, something that one might call '*un état de mysticisme moral*'? If so, that would be very near to his normal spiritual condition. But things being as they were, in 1923 and 1924, it is with George Eliot and Tchekov that he finds his closest affinities, and he is content to apply to himself the phrase that he had found for Pater: *une cathédrale désaffectée*.

Everything in me is religion transposed; not so much religious survival (I was far less authentically religious when I believed) but religion stirred and infinitely fortified by the impossibility of believing. Religion is for me *ce plein de sérieux qu'il me faut pour compenser le vide de foi*.

What exactly did Du Bos mean by love of his neighbour? No writer, we have seen, was ever less publicly engaged. His friend, Jacques Rivière, who had founded the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, acknowledged a responsibility towards his time, but Du Bos could only give himself to certain chosen individuals, whether in literature or in life. Also, he did not believe that love of one's neighbour could proceed from hatred of oneself. This was to stretch, quite inadmissibly, the evangelical precept. If the love of one's neighbour was an effort against nature, as Du Bos believed it was, should it not begin, as Christ had said, with oneself and then with those nearest one? To begin on the extreme limits of the horizon was 'almost surely to court failure'; people have no difficulty in loving humanity who are quite unable to love the man next door.

Du Bos makes a valuable distinction between selfishness and self-awareness. The self was hateful to Pascal because it was concupiscent, but it could only be concupiscent when it is blindly active and therefore incapable of any reflexion whatever. The profound sense of the self—*cette saveur inimitable qu'on ne trouve qu'à soi-même*—was for Du Bos the most anti-concupiscent, the most a-concupiscent, of all spiritual conditions. When Pascal declared that the unique virtue was self-hatred, he was barring the way to love of one's neighbour. It was only too easy to hate oneself, but

if one hated oneself it was impossible not to hate one's neighbour also. And here Du Bos quotes a cynical entry from Byron's Journal. 'Pretty well today, on condition that no one speaks to me.' He goes on to ask what are the most favourable conditions for loving one's neighbour, and he finds his answer in Browning, in his radiance and inexhaustible buoyancy. 'Browning overflows; he is like an incandescent sun, and he sees everything multiplied by the loveliness of his own rays.' Like George Eliot and the Tolstoy of the great novels, Browning had in a supreme degree the power to imagine other people's states of mind, although, as Du Bos finely observes, there is thrown over all his creations 'the magic of a mid-summer sunset of the Venetian school'.

For Du Bos there was no distinction to be drawn between personal and intellectual charity, since he had the same approach to books and to people. It was not that he gave to the characters in fiction a false actuality, but that he was primarily interested in the mind which had created them. Here an extension of his subjectivism—and he was a subjective *surtout*—was the condition of his sympathy. At the same time he felt stranded between literature and life.

There is something perilous to the highest degree, something almost ludicrous in what a Giorgione, a Keats, a Pater, a James, a Bach and a score of others signify for me in comparison with what I get out of the life that goes on living itself around. Life is like a stream running in a parallel direction to the shore where I stand, sometimes wonderfully alive . . . but sometimes also desperately shivering.

This is the critical dilemma, unforgettably illustrated by Bernard in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*; the predicament of every commentator who wonders if, after all, the world has need of his comment. But here, as so often, the power to sympathize brought Du Bos the capacity to suffer, and integrated him more closely than he guessed both with literature and with life. The Journal already takes rank among the masterpieces of introspection, and although Du Bos was in many ways what Mauriac called a 'mandarin', few will contest Mauriac's judgement that he was, with Jacques Rivière, '*le seul critique du monde intérieur que notre génération ait compté*'. It is precisely in this interior world, the natural domain of the *spirituel*, that literature and life are at one.

And it remains true that Du Bos was led back to religion by

what he called the 'aesthetic miracle'. The activity of the artist could not be explained without taking into account the operation of the Holy Ghost. Art, for Du Bos, tended always towards religion, and in the debate opened by Brémond in *Prière et Poesie* and by Maritain in *Art et Scholastique*, his natural Platonism ranged him with the former. Where Maritain had seen in art an activity analogous to contemplation but by no means to be identified with it, Brémond and Du Bos were inclined to place the artist, not indeed on the same plane as the saint, but following the same trail. Above all things, Du Bos was an *intuitif*, suspicious of logical deduction and to that extent foreign to the French intellectual temper. When asked by a colleague at Notre Dame whether he found any difference between the French and American doctors, his reply was characteristic. 'The French doctor, even when he is wrong, is intuitive.' He would have put side by side Pascal's '*le coeur a des raisons dont l'esprit ne sait rien*' and Bergson's '*l'intuition est la pièce d'or dont le raisonnement n'a jamais fini de rendre la monnaie*'. But then Bergson was one of the chief influences in Du Bos' life, and there was nothing surprising in the approach of Bergson in 1940 to the threshold which Du Bos had definitely crossed in 1927.

The last stages of that journey are recorded with the accuracy of a log-book. Incapable of self-satisfaction, Du Bos made his own Jacques Rivière's lapidary lament '*Entre notre âme et nous il y a au soir, après la journée la mieux employée, une fine, une décourageante différence*.' This did not as yet amount to a sense of sin, for Du Bos drew a distinction, valid as far as it went, between sin and failure. At no time does he seem to have felt the thirst for the sacraments, which torments anyone who has known and abandoned the life of Christian piety. The sense of personal responsibility for the sufferings of Christ, which pitches a man into the confessional, seems not to have been present with him, at least in 1924. No one had a better right than Charles Du Bos to apply to himself the words of Newman—'I have never sinned against the light'—but he feared lest the idea of sin might too easily become apocalyptic, that it might further encourage the *tragique spirituel* to which he was so naturally prone. The truth would seem to be that Du Bos was a man of great natural virtue; his spirituality, though it tended to screen the full blaze of the transcendental, protected him from the abyss.

His conversion, when it came, was the result of long meditation on the words of Christ. He would have nothing of a Higher

criticism which doubted their authenticity, maintaining that the unique character of Christ derived essentially from His sayings, and that His acts were no more than a putting into practice of what had already been spoken. 'There is in all the words of Christ a plentitude, a concentration of wisdom and experience so human, that it is the very degree of His humanity which makes us believe that He was more than Man.' This wisdom and experience were compared to shadows thrown from the world invisible. Du Bos resolutely refused to explain the *plus* by the *moins*, finding, on the contrary, that the *plus* proved the existence of a *surplus*, and that only the *surplus* made sense. He arrived at these conclusions in April 1927, and he already feels himself separated from his friends, who were content with an eclecticism to which he himself might so easily have been a prey and to whose charms he was not a stranger. Coming out into the Avenue d'Eylau after a conversation with Gide, he recalls Pascal's saying: '*Que nous le voulions ou non, nous sommes embarqués.*' He has left the bank and is already drawn into the current. He still resists, but knows that he resists in vain. '*J'ai l'obscur perception que la grande aventure m'attend et que je n'y échapperai point.*'

He knows, too, that it is God Himself whom he resists, with the natural result that he feels at once oppressed and abandoned. He has no illusions about the liberty he is so determined to defend. '*Libre de quoi? Qu'est-ce que cela me fait. Libre pour quoi? Voilà ce qui m'importe.*' Once again Nietzsche had interpreted his thought. He knows that what the philosophers call the liberty of indifference is a climate which he could not breathe for an instant. His last temptation, which haunted the dark night of his vigil, was the refusal to admit that to be a Catholic and to believe in God were one and the same thing. Yet he had already abandoned the refuge of theism. Unable to envisage Faith without experience, he saw with what difficulty theism assured the relations between the soul and God; and even when it seemed to do so, this was perhaps by virtue of forces not its own. Du Bos could not remain with his friend Curtius on the outskirts of Catholicism, believing in the divinity of the Son and His union with the Father, but refusing the discipline of Rome. 'If I become a Catholic once again,' he writes, 'I expect I shall forbid myself many more things than I need to.' This was an example of his extremism, and he anticipated the Catholic answer that he would feel himself much freer than before.

Du Bos had reached a point where the subtlety of his intro-

spection and the accuracy of his self-knowledge proved his greatest peril. He recognized and refuted the sophistry of each temptation, but yet he could not move. Submission had come to appear the easy way out, and yet that it should so appear was very plausibly *la tentation de la dernière heure*. There was also the suggestion, inspired on the one hand by Valéry and on the other by Marcus Aurelius, that the difficult thing is the best thing; and that in consequence God prefers dubiety to abandon. And yet no sooner has Du Bos formulated the thought than he perceives its falsity. The notion is stoical, not Christian, and he has said so himself a hundred times. But this man who has lived by thought has arrived at a crisis where thought will no longer serve him. Is he an artist, like so many others, who plays with golden words or golden notes, while his heart is of iron—an iron grille locked against the entry of Grace? Here again he rebuts a suggestion which would make nonsense of so much experience. He remembers Bach, and the Beethoven Quartets, and the Schumann Concerto, and the Franck Quintet, and he does not hesitate to speak of the divinity of art. These men had indeed received an *esprit d'or*, but they had not made it the servant of their pleasure. For him, Du Bos, the aesthetic adventure had been nothing if not a way of knowledge.

There were two further objections; the first that his friends would feel that he was abandoning them, and the second a last flicker of fear that his freedom of thought would be forbidden him. He still saw himself as a kind of liaison officer between Catholicism and contemporary thought. Who beside himself could oppose the supernatural truths to the thought for thought's sake of Valéry, the mechanical Cartesianism of Alain? He recognized these longings as the last hankerings of pride, and all he wished to preserve was the Claudelian.

Quelqu'un qui soit en moi plus moi-même que moi.

'But then, why are you frightened,' came back the inexorable voice, 'since it is this someone whom you are asking to live with you?' At this point Du Bos confessed himself '*sans réponse*'. But he still cherished an 'impious preconception that having been so aware of God outside Catholicism, he might be less so within the ramparts'. This was no more, he admitted, than a fear of security—a fear, moreover, that was clean contrary to his nature. He admitted, too, the reproach that anyone who knew him well might level at him; 'It is always the same; you want to do everything for yourself—you will leave nothing to God.'

For three months the interminable debate was suspended and Charles Du Bos was to experience the truth of what he had written about Keats. '*Le calme véritable est fils de la fièvre.*' On 30 July he had an appointment at 5.30 in the afternoon with the Abbé Altermann, with whom he had been in contact for some time. He had promised to bring him one of two answers, and there is nothing in the Journal of 29 July to indicate which he had decided upon, nor indeed to what precise question he was due to reply. But he tells us that Altermann had counselled him to swim with the current, and we soon discover, from the later entries, that he had resolved no longer to resist the Divine invitation. A new Du Bos shines through these fascinating pages, guarding all the heritage of the *spirituel*, keeping faith with his *grands morts*, and growing daily in lucidity and power. From now onwards the Journals tell of daily Mass at the Benedictine Chapel in the Rue Monsieur, which had meant so much to Huysmans and Psichari, of continuous meditation and prayer, of scrupulous self-examination. They show this profound intelligence submitting itself to spiritual direction and setting its course for the nearly inaccessible altitudes of the supernatural life. But we did not need the Journals to tell us this; it was manifest in all the activity and conversation of his later years; it was eloquent in his physical habit and in the radiance of his personality.

This original thinker who discussed no subject without leaving it in a new light, came to glory in the unoriginality of the Faith. Hearing a sermon at Sunday Mass he was impressed by the fact that it had all been said so many times before, and the only priests he criticized were those who sought to make their effect by some new trick of eloquence or presentation. Similarly this man who was such a specialist in friendship came to enjoy the anonymous community of the faithful. He notes with gratitude a woman who cleared a passage for him through the chairs, as he was coming down, lost in meditation, from the altar rails. He feels he has touched the nerve of silent fellow-feeling 'which always exists between those who communicate at the same morning Mass'.

It was to be expected that he would luxuriate in the liturgy as it used to be rendered at the Rue Monsieur. The '*per saecula saeculorum*' expressed the 'sentiment of eternity crowning the sensation of timelessness, this majesty always equal to itself, these dimensions, this scale, this refusal to consider anything which has not the dimensions of eternity, this sovereign importance of every

word and gesture, this liturgy so charged with significance that our minds, our sensibilities, our imaginations are not equipped to assimilate all at once everything that each liturgical minute implies.' He signals out two moments for special celebration—the *Tu solus Altissimus* of the *Gloria* and the 'attack of the *Sanctus*'; the triple affirmation which posed the immutable ideal of Christianity and recalled the sentence of Leon Bloy, which echoes like a refrain through so much Catholic writing in France, '*Il n'y a qu'une tristesse—c'est de n'être pas des saints.*'

Charles Du Bos would say that he had the gift of tears, but not of laughter, and there can be no question that contrition played a central part in his devotional life. He had also to bear the continual mortification of ill-health, and, at frequent intervals, of acute physical suffering. But he persevered with unflinching courage, developing his thoughts in a remarkable essay on the Spiritual Order in Literature, and still feeling able to write in the margin of a cocky, Catholic undergraduate's essay on Shelley. 'You would be right, but Shelley was an angel.' Fidelity was the keynote of his character, and he was true to the dictum of Coventry Patmore that he was so fond of quoting. 'To him that waits all things reveal themselves, provided that he has the courage not to deny, in the darkness, what he has seen in the light.' To the observer his life seemed remarkably of a piece, but he himself was conscious of a divorce which finds expression in the most sublime passage of his *Journal*. It is not possible to render the full beauty of this in translation, but it is in itself so simple and direct that even across the baldness of an English version, something of the author's conversation with God may nevertheless shine through.

You who are filling me with Your grace, O Lord, do me yet another service. You know that there is always some one thing more that we ask of You, and give me enough light, Your Light I mean, to understand why it is so difficult to bring about this famous reconciliation, which I discuss at such length in my *Journal*, between the chapel in the Rue Monsieur—that is to say You, Lord—and the return to daily life. For of course I know that I must dwell in You, as You dwell in us, and I know very well that that seems possible, easy, and as good as achieved in the strictly religious way of life. (Seen from outside, of course; I know that the religious life has its own terrible sufferings; acedia and a thousand special temptations.) And I can imagine that it is perhaps an even greater triumph to dwell in You when one is in the heart of the world, among the cares of day-to-day existence. But when we are close to

You, down there in the Rue Monsieur, perhaps it would be better not to let ourselves feel so strongly how little all the rest matters, since we have to live with all the rest, while still living with You. And yet and yet, if You don't make us feel this, even if every morning You make us feel it just a little bit less, no matter how little that may be, oh! then it is as if we lost the strength to go on. Then we can neither leave the world nor re-enter it, and I see that the true solution is that the leaving it behind which You allow us in order to come to You must be in itself the strength by virtue of which we are able to go back to it. I see it so clearly that even before I had found You again, I always conceived of the exaltation and the inimitable flight that goes with it, as a springboard for better living in the current, daily, humdrum meaning of the word. For me the model of this exaltation was the music of Franck, which I used to call the music of courage. Lord, let it fall to the ground—this partition which I still feel between my life in You and the rest of my existence; make them each play (if I may use a musical analogy) in the heart of the other; make me dwell more deeply in You, by acquitting myself throughout the day of whatever tasks may fall upon me; grant, finally, that whatever is discontinuous and partial, disparate and inessential, may not only be endured but achieved thoroughly, and that this may acquire a little of the value and merit about which I was speaking in my Journal yesterday in relation to physical suffering.

You have already taken me, O Lord, and I belong to You, but grant that so long as I am on earth I may never be tempted to ask You to take me in the way that Elias asked You at the limit of his weariness and discouragement, crying out 'Take me, O Lord, for I am no better than my fathers.' Lord, You know that there is no pride in this, only a simple intolerance of myself. All I want is to be worth the best that You have put in me. Let me not forget Your presence, O Lord, and let this inexhaustible stream of contrition and thanksgiving which You have allowed to well up in me be the water which not only purifies but nourishes and permits me to keep faith. And forgive me, O Lord, for needing this stream and for needing to understand, to see clearly—forgive me if needing all this means that I am afraid to let myself be guided by You alone. You want each of us poor creatures, one by one, for Yourself, with the unique and original soul that You have given to us, though it is not original in the modern sense of originality. You want the soul to be itself, but to be for You, and You forgive us what Your Claudel has so well described as our 'unspeakable personal absurdity'. Lord, I am absurd, I know it, but I love You and I want to serve You; lend me just a little of Your Light, or even without lending me any of it, use me in whatever way You would most like me to be of use to You.

JOHN RUSKIN

By ARNOLD LUNN

JOHN RUSKIN was born in 1809, in the same year as Queen Victoria and Charles Kingsley and Walt Whitman. His father, a wine merchant, had married his cousin, the daughter of a man who owned a herring fleet and whose early death had forced his widow to keep a public-house in Croydon in order to give her daughter, who in due course became Ruskin's mother, the best education available for young ladies in Croydon.

Ruskin's mother was a handsome woman with a good mind and a passionate nature rigidly controlled by the code of evangelical Puritanism. One of Ruskin's earliest memories was being presented with a magnificent Punch and Judy Show which was at once relegated by his formidable mother to a locked cupboard and never seen again, for Mrs. Ruskin disapproved of toys. None the less English literature owes Mrs. Ruskin a great debt, for she formed his style by reading the Bible with him, three chapters a day, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of Revelations and then back to Genesis.

The influence of the Hebrew Prophets is apparent in the opening paragraph of Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*; words which came back to me as I watched the sky red with the glow of the burning London docks during one of the major Luftwaffe attacks of September 1940:

Since first the dominion of men was asserted over the ocean, three thrones, of mark beyond all others, have been set upon its sands: the thrones of Tyre, Venice, and England. Of the First of these great powers only the memory remains; of the Second, the ruin; the Third which inherits their greatness, if it forget their example, may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction.

In 1822 Ruskin was given as a present for his thirteenth birthday a copy of Roger's *Italy*, profusely illustrated with plates made from Turner's engravings. The book fired Ruskin with a longing to visit the places therein described and engraved, and in 1823 they set out for their first continental tour, travelling by Calais to

Cologne and thence up the Rhine to Switzerland, and by Berne and Lucerne to Italy and back by the Simplon and Geneva. On his fifteenth birthday Ruskin asked for Saussure's *Voyages dans les Alpes*, a book which started his interest in Geology.

Even as a child Ruskin's talent as a draughtsman was apparent. As a young man his deviations from artistic orthodoxy might perhaps have given him an honoured place among the fore-runners of the Surrealists had not his father intervened:

A long time ago, before ever I had seen Oxford, I painted a picture of the Lake of Como for my father. It was not at all like the Lake of Como; but I thought it rather the better for that. My father differed with me . . . and suggested that if I would make the lake look a little more like water, I should be under no necessity of explaining its nature by the presence of floating objects. I thought him at the time a very simple person for his pains; but have since learned . . . that the great point of painting a lake is—to get it to look like water.

And because Ruskin realized that the great point of drawing a mountain is to get it to look like a mountain, he was the first English artist the accuracy of whose mountain drawings will satisfy a mountaineer and the delicacy and individual charm of which will delight the art lover.

Ruskin entered Oxford in 1837, the year in which Victoria began to reign. The Oxford of 1837 was a hierarchical society and undergraduates were divided into students, gentlemen-commoners, commoners and servitors, distinguished not only by their seats at table but also by their caps and gowns. The expression 'a tuft hunter' is indeed derived from the golden tassel worn by the gentlemen-commoners. Most of the gentlemen-commoners were members of the nobility or landed gentry, but any parent who paid the necessary fees could enter his son as a gentleman-commoner. Ruskin tells us that he was received as a 'good-humoured and inoffensive little cur, contemptuously yet kindly, among the dogs of race at the gentlemen-commoners' table.'

No 'dog of race' would be guilty of a greater solecism than to display any interest in his work, as Ruskin discovered when he was assigned by his tutor the honour of reading his prize essay in Hall. From time to time he was mildly ragged. Once a drunken party stormed his rooms, broke up some of his furniture and rushed into his bedroom where Ruskin met them with a disarming smile and said, 'Gentlemen, I am sorry I cannot now entertain you as I

would wish, but my father, who is engaged in the sherry trade, has put it into my power to invite you all to wine tomorrow evening.' The rioters withdrew with appreciative cheers.

Ruskin had a natural aristocracy of mind and manner, and was soon accepted in the most exclusive sets in the University, and this in spite of the fact that his formidable mother insisted on spending the term at Oxford and never released her son from the daily duty of drinking tea with her.

Ruskin won the Newdigate prize poem, but he had no real talent for poetry and was justly indignant when his father, many years later, republished, without asking his permission, his poetic juvenilia.

A violent attack on Turner's paintings in the Academy in 1836 provoked Ruskin into writing a spirited reply which pleased Turner, to whom it was sent, but which was never published. In May 1843 writing under the pseudonym of 'A graduate of Oxford' he published the first volume of *Modern Painters: Their superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting To all The Ancient Masters proved by examples of the True, the Beautiful, and the Intellectual, From the Works of Modern Artists, especially From those of J. M. W. Turner, Esq., R.A.* Ruskin's equipment for this ambitious thesis was of the slightest. His knowledge of Ancient Masters, as Mr. R. H. Wilenski was the first to show, was confined to what he had seen in the small Dulwich gallery and to a few paintings in private collections, and the immediate success of this audacious venture into Art controversy was due not only to the clear imprint of genius in every chapter but also to the fact that the main thesis of the book had an instant appeal to his readers. The 'Modern Painters' whom he discusses were almost without exception English and their superiority to Ancient Masters, most of whom had the misfortune to be born abroad, was agreeable doctrine, as Mr. Peter Quennell has pointed out, in an age in which the Englishman's national pride was unqualified by the slightest dawn of doubt. Moreover, Ruskin's thesis that modern art was superior to the ancient conformed to the fashionable dogma of the age, the belief in inevitable progress.

The reception given to *Modern Painters* was, on the whole, extremely favourable, but there were some discordant notes, to which Ruskin reacted characteristically. 'Writers like the present critic of *Blackwood's Magazine*,' he wrote, 'one cannot suspect of partiality for it implies feeling, nor of prejudice for it implies some

previous knowledge of the subject.' He does not appear to have been attacked on the point where he was most vulnerable, and it was left to Ruskin himself to discover in his researches for later volumes of *Modern Painters* how unjust he had been to the Ancient Masters, and to repent his rashness in embarking on criticisms of an art period of which he had known so little.

On 10 April, 1848, Ruskin married Euphemia Gray. Any possibility of a successful marriage was ruined by the fact that his mother was determined that the marriage should in no way affect her own relations with her son. Many years later he confided to George Macdonald that he found that he did not love his wife and that under such circumstances 'it would have been a sin against her' to consummate his marriage. This reads to me like a rationalization of impotence, for no normal man could practise complete celibacy with a beautiful woman on the honeymoon, even if he decided that he did not love her. He did not defend the divorce suit because the last thing he wanted was to be saddled with Effie for life. Ruskin's mother had already ruined what little hope there was of a successful marriage. I agree with Mr. Wilenski that 'his behaviour when his wife deserted him, and always afterwards in regard to her, was perfect'. And I adhere to this opinion even after reading Admiral Sir William James's book *The Order of Release* in which Effie is the martyr and Ruskin the villain of the piece. It is here that Mr. Lewin's book is so valuable. He insists that Millais (who was in love with Effie before the marriage was broken up and subsequently married her) was 'dominated by the desire for spectacular material success, an ambition as conventional as the expensive tastes he soon learned to acquire'. Millais was influenced by a fantastic legal opinion obtained by the mother of Rose La Touche, with whom Ruskin was in love, that if Ruskin married again and had children, the former marriage would be held good and the divorce annulled, a terrifying possibility for a man as socially ambitious as Millais. The really remarkable fact is that such grotesque legal advice could ever have been given, for the Law, like the Church, is only interested in the *fact*, not in the *reasons*, why a marriage has not been consummated.

This terror that their own marriage might be declared invalid as the indirect result of Ruskin's marriage to Rose prompted Mrs. Millais to do all she could to stop Ruskin marrying Rose, and the bitter, venomous attack on Ruskin which she wrote to Mrs. La Touche was clearly actuated by self-interest, and also, as Mr.

Lewin observes, by a 'deeply-rooted propensity to self-justification'. Effie's rôle had to be represented as that of a martyr and 'for her to be a martyr Ruskin had invariably to be represented as a monster'. Millais must have known that even after the break-up of his marriage Ruskin 'had shown him nothing but affection and that his own conduct towards Ruskin had scarcely been above all censure, and it was probably this which prompted his first attitude of virtuous indignation. But this attitude later crystallized into a narrow malevolence. This too may have been partly caused by the treatment meted out to him from unexpected quarters: for, during the scandal of 1854, it was unlikely that he would have escaped an inconvenient censure.'

Rose La Touche died and Ruskin never married her, but he was desperately in love with this rather priggish young woman. The wisest of men have written the silliest of letters under the influence of love, and they should not be judged by what they write in such circumstances. An undue preoccupation with this side of Ruskin's life, though in conformity with modern standards of criticism, seems to me to throw the whole picture out of focus. Great prophets are often monumentally inept in their relations with women, and neither in Ruskin's case nor in John Wesley's were the effects of such ineptitude permanently harmful. And in any case I prefer the ineptitudes of Wesley and Ruskin to the ego-centric realism of John Calvin, who, when contemplating marriage, could write: 'I am not one of those insane lovers who when once smitten by the beauty of a woman embrace her very faults. This is the only beauty which attracts me, if she be modest, obliging, fastidious, careful, patient, and likely to be attentive to my health.'

It is interesting to note the contrast between Mr. Quennell's attitude to Byron and to Ruskin.¹ Byron not only practised all varieties of vice, natural and unnatural. He not only committed incest with his sister and deserted his wife, but he was the complete cad in his dealings with women. *Manfred*, the theme of which is incest, was a blatant advertisement of his relations to his half sister to whom he sent a copy of the play and asked her if *Manfred* had not caused her 'a pucker', a heartless remark which wounded her, as Ethel Mayne says, 'precisely as all women who had to do with Byron were wounded sooner or later'.

Mr. Quennell writes with affection and admiration of Byron

¹ *Portrait of a Prophet*, by Peter Quennell (Collins, 15s.).

but with ill-concealed distaste of Ruskin. Whereas no enlightened modern critic would dare to hint a condemnation of vice, the injury which Ruskin inflicted on his wife by failing to consummate his marriage deeply shocks the intelligentsia. Impotence is the unforgivable sin crying to Bloomsbury for vengeance. It does no matter whom you sleep with provided that you sleep with somebody. Infidelity has acquired the status of a minor virtue, impotence of ultimate infamy. I am as anxious as most people to be in the fashion, but when Ruskin is described as 'a contemptible character' by a reviewer of Mr. Quennell's provocative study, I am moved to mild protest, for I agree with a just and discerning biographer of that very great Victorian, R. H. Wilenski, when he writes: 'Ruskin was a good man whose goodness was on a scale to be of use to a great number of people, and I have called his social conscience the finest thing about him . . . he was a man who it seems to me had only one fault in his character, self-indulgence.'

Mr. Quennell tells us that it was his object 'to suggest how the frustration of Ruskin's private hopes finally brought to an end his career of public usefulness'. Rose died in 1875 when Ruskin was fifty-six years of age, when most of his important books had appeared, but he was reappointed Slade Professor long after Rose's death and delivered the series of lectures published as *The Art of England*. In his later years he wrote *The Bible of Amiens* and completed *Praeterita*, the most charming of all his books, in 1889. It was not his frustrated love but occasional severe attacks of brain fever which weakened his magnificent powers towards the end. There is no evidence that these attacks originated in his passion for Rose.

No critic who is mainly interested in his love life, or rather in the absence of a love life, can do justice to Ruskin, for neither his wife nor Rose had any real influence on the development of his thought or any effect, positive or negative, on his public career.

If the failure of his marriage and the frustration of his love for Rose had been factors of real importance in Ruskin's life it is unthinkable that he could have had, as he certainly did have, more influence than any other contemporary in forming and changing the national taste. His influence was decisive in awakening an appreciation for Byzantine and Gothic architecture, in opening the minds of men to the beauty of the Alps (he sent Leslie Stephen and Freshfield among others to the Alps). In politics he was the real founder of Christian socialism, and Ruskin Hall at Oxford is

a perpetual memorial to a man whose heart had compassion for the multitude. He was a most versatile genius. He foresaw, as Mr. Wilenski, the author of another admirable *Life*, rightly says: 'our present troubles and proposed solutions on the lines now being put forward by the American economists as "Technocracy", and by English economists, like F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, who has recently advocated a multiple-commodity standard'. He was the first to question the sacred dogma that gold is the only possible basis for currency.

No critic can understand Ruskin if he is completely out of sympathy with his religion, for religion is the key to his interpretation of mountains, of art, of architecture and of politics, and no sound criticism of his many activities is possible if the critic ignores his highly personal theology.

He describes in *Praeterita* his final emancipation from the puritanism of his youth:

There, one Sunday morning, I made my way in the south suburb to a little chapel which, by a dusty roadside, gathered to its unobserved door the few sheep of the old Waldensian faith who had wandered from their own pastures under Monte Viso into the worldly capital of Piedmont.

The assembled congregation numbered in all some three or four and twenty, of whom fifteen or sixteen were grey-haired women. Their solitary and clerkless preacher, a somewhat stunted figure in a plain black coat, with a cracked voice, after leading them through the languid forms of prayer which are all that in truth are possible to people whose present life is dull and terrestrial future unchangeable, put his utmost zeal into a consolatory discourse on the wickedness of the wide world, more especially of the plain of Piedmont and city of Turin, and on the exclusive favour with God, enjoyed by the between nineteen and twenty-four elect members of his congregation, in the streets of Admah and Zeboim.

Myself neither cheered nor greatly alarmed by this doctrine, I walked back into the condemned city, and up into the gallery where Paul Veronese's Solomon and the Queen of Sheba glowed in full afternoon light. The gallery windows being open, there came in with the warm air floating swells and falls of military music, from the courtyard before the palace, which seemed to me more devotional in their perfect art, tune and discipline than anything I remembered of evangelical hymns. And as the perfect colour and sound gradually asserted their power on me, they seemed finally to fasten me in the old article of Jewish faith, that things done delightfully and rightly were always done by the help and in the Spirit of God . . . that day, my evangelical beliefs were put away, to be debated of no more.

The Stones of Venice led Ruskin towards the rock of Peter for he judged art by the Catholic criterion, but though attracted by the accidents of Catholicism he remained to the last the most individualistic and Protestant of Protestants. True he discovered that 'all beautiful prayers were Catholic—all wise interpretations of the Bible Catholic—and every manner of Protestant written services, whatsoever either insolently altered corruptions, or washed-out and ground-down rags and débris of the great Catholic collects, litanies and songs of praise'.

But in reply to the question, 'Why did not you become a Catholic at once, then?' Ruskin can only answer, 'It might as well be asked, Why did not I become a fire-worshipper? I *could* become nothing but what I was, or was growing into. I no more believed in the living Pope than I did in the living Khan of Tartary.'

Mr. Quennell quotes Holman Hunt's account of his meeting with Ruskin at Venice. A reference at this point might have been given to the Library edition, xxxiv, pp. 661-66, which partially correct Holman Hunt's recollections. Ruskin is reported as saying 'that there is no Eternal Father . . . that man can have no helper but himself. . . . I confess this conclusion brings with it great unhappiness'. If Mr. Quennell were more interested in Ruskin's religious beliefs he would not have left the reader under the impression that this melancholy negativism represented Ruskin's final position. Eleven years later Ruskin wrote *The Bible of Amiens*, and by then he had finally left behind the phase of rationalism and doubt. In 1887 he gave a stained-glass window to the Catholic Church at Coniston, and described himself in a letter to a friend as a 'Christian Catholic in the wide and eternal sense'. No study of Ruskin as a prophet should include his *alleged* confession of atheism in 1869 without the necessary correction provided by the facts of his later life.

The Holman Hunt meeting took place in 1869 and the return to the faith began a year later. 'Throughout the seventies and the early eighties,' writes Mr. Leon,¹ 'Ruskin's attitude to religion apparently underwent a slow evolution, leading him from agnosticism to profound belief. But here, again, as with his political inconsistencies, the change was far more superficial than it appeared. In fact, like Tolstoy, Ruskin had never lost his deep reverence and belief in Deity.'

Ruskin's mountain doctrine, like his aesthetic and political

¹ *Ruskin, The Great Victorian*, by D. Leon (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 30s.).

doctrines, is unintelligible, if divorced from that theocentric context, which it has been the convention among Alpine critics resolutely to ignore. Ruskin did not regard mountains as fortuitous protuberances, whose form was solely determined by material forces. On the contrary they were 'appointed for three great offices, to give motion to water, to give motion to air, and to cause perpetual change in the soils of the earth'. 'But the feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment, are their higher missions.' Again the ethical criterion by means of which Ruskin demonstrates the sociological and aesthetic superiority of the Gothic is also invoked, with *infinitely* less plausibility, to differentiate between the influences of different types of rock. Thus he contends that landscape composed of crystalline, as opposed to sedimentary rocks, 'cannot become muddy, or foul, or unwholesome'. He even tried to prove that the natives who lived in granite countries 'had a force and healthiness of character' which differentiated them from the 'inhabitants of the less pure districts of the hills'.

Ruskin was in the direct descent from the great mediaeval teleologists. His 'geology', if indeed it can be described as such, is gloriously mediaeval in outlook. Mountains, for Ruskin, were not the inevitable result of certain physical changes on the surface of the earth. No, they are appointed to fulfil 'three great offices' which he proceeds to describe in detail—'in order to preserve the health and increase the happiness of mankind'. Nor is their arrangement haphazard. The great peaks are set back on a vast Alpine plateau. They 'are not allowed'—a teleological phrase—'to come to the edge of this plateau for fear lest the stones and snow-slides from their slopes should fall on inhabited ground and cause death and destruction'. 'It is hardly necessary to point out,' adds Ruskin, 'the perfect wisdom and kindness of this arrangement as a provision for the safety of the inhabitants of the high mountain regions.' Roger Bacon himself might have concluded, as Ruskin concludes, 'Now that such a structure is the best and wisest possible is indeed a sufficient reason for its existence and to many people it may seem useless to question further respecting its origin.'

Since all mountains are high and all snow white and all valleys profound, it is impossible for the word-painter of mountain scenery to differentiate between one mountain landscape and

another, if he confines himself to purely factual nouns and adjectives. The essence of evocative description is to discover the simile or metaphor or apt comparison which helps to suggest the peculiar characteristic of a *particular* mountainscape. The *contrast* between summer and winter mountainscapes is, for instance, evoked in Ruskin's description of Pilatus in winter 'looking as if it was entirely constructed of frosted silver, like Geneva filigree work—lighted by golden sunshine with long purple shadows; and the entire chain of the Alps rosy beyond'.

This power to *differentiate* one mountainscape from another was not the strongest point of Ruskin's mountain-writing, but no man has been more successful in conveying his deep uncovetous passion for the mountains:

And if the scenery be resolutely level, insisting upon the declaration of its own flatness in all the detail of it, as in Holland, or Lincolnshire, or Central Lombardy, it appears to me like a prison, and I cannot long endure it. But the slightest rise and fall in the road—a mossy bank at the side of a crag of chalk, with brambles at its brow, overhanging it,—a ripple over three or four stones in the stream by the bridge,—above all, a wild bit of ferny ground under a fir or two, looking as if, possibly, one might see a hill if one got to the other side of the trees, will instantly give me intense delight, because the shadow, or the hope, of the hills is in them.

Again, no writer has been more effective as an interpreter of the power, might, majesty and dominion of the Alps. Sir George Young, who was present as a young man at Ruskin's inaugural lecture at Cambridge, once described to me the scene as Ruskin prepared his audience for a magnificent passage of sustained rhetoric. Ruskin paused so as to focus the attention of the undergraduates and then began to read his description of the Alps from the south. Gradually his voice rose:

Then, higher and higher around the approaching darkness of the plain, rise the central chains, not as on the Switzer's side, a recognizable group and following of successive and separate hills, but a wilderness of jagged peaks, cast in passionate and fierce profusion along the circumference of heaven; precipice behind precipice, and gulph beyond gulph, filled with the flaming of the sunset, and forming mighty channels for the flowings of the clouds, which roll up against them out of the vast Italian plain, forced together by the narrowing crescent, and breaking up at last against the Alpine wall in towers of spectral spray; or sweeping up its ravines with long moans of complaining thunder. Out from between the cloudy pillars, as they pass, emerge for ever the great battlements of the

memorable and perpetual hills: Viso, with her shepherd-witnesses to ancient faith; Rocca Melone, the highest place of Alpine pilgrimage; Iseran, who shed her burial sheets of snow about the march of Hannibal; Cenis, who shone with her glacier light on the descent of Charlemagne; Paradiso, who watched with her opposite crest the stoop of the French eagle to Marengo,

and then he paused and he allowed his voice to fall in order to suggest the descent to Italy and ended:

and underneath all these, lying in her soft languor, this tender Italy, lapped in dews of sleep, or more than sleep—one knows not if it is trance, from which morning shall yet roll the blinding mists away, or if the fair shadows of her quietude are indeed the shades of purple death.

Ruskin might have developed into one of the English pioneers of the Alps, for he thoroughly enjoyed the rock scramble up the Riffelhorn and covered a great deal of ground hunting for crystals near the Chamonix Aiguilles. He would probably have become a climber but for his one serious fault—self-indulgence. ‘You fed me effeminately,’ he writes to his father, ‘and luxuriously to that extent that I actually now could not travel in rough countries without taking a cook with me.’

He defended the Alpine Club after the Matterhorn accident: ‘Some experience of distinct peril, and the acquirements of habits of quick and calm action in its presence, are necessary elements at some period of life, in the formation of manly character.’ In a letter to his father from Chamonix (1863) he writes:

That question of the moral effect of danger is a very curious one; but this I know and find, practically, that if you come to a dangerous place, and turn back from it, though it may have been perfectly right and wise to do so, still your *character* has suffered some slight deterioration; you are, to that extent, weaker, more lifeless, more effeminate, more liable to passion and error in future; whereas if you go through with the danger, though it may have been apparently wrong and foolish to encounter it, you come out of the encounter a stronger and better man, fitter for every sort of work and trial, and *nothing but danger* produces this effect.

It is not easy to reconcile his discerning appreciation of the Alpine Club ethos with his violent attack on the Club in another context. ‘The Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb and slide down again, with “shrieks of delight”.’ But perhaps this attack was partially inspired by unavowed regret that he had stopped short in the Alps at the

threshold of danger and by the kind of envy for courage which in another context finds consolation in cartoons about Colonel Blimp. But though Ruskin missed the educative effect of danger, voluntarily accepted, his long and patient study of mountains in general, and of mountain geology in particular, enriched his life, and saved him from the aridity which is the vocational malady of the urban intellectual. Ruskin, like Virgil, was one of those *deos qui novit agrestes*, and if Mr. Quennell had devoted more time to the study of Ruskin's love of the mountains, and a little less to his love life, his portrait, which is always vivid and accomplished, would have been more convincing. Perhaps only a mountain lover can understand Ruskin, for his mountain philosophy, which was wholly theocentric, helps us to understand his religion, and his religion was the key to his interpretation of art and architecture.

His social philosophy has its roots in Christianity and is organically related to his aesthetic principles, as emerges very clearly in one of the noblest essays in the English language, the chapter on 'The Nature of Gothic' in *The Stones of Venice*:

The Greek gave to the lower workman no subject which he could not perfectly execute. The Assyrian gave him subjects which he could only execute imperfectly, but fixed a legal standard for his imperfection. The workman was, in both systems, a slave. But in the mediaeval, or especially Christian system of ornament, this slavery is done away with altogether; Christianity having recognized, in small things as well as great, the individual value of every soul . . . go forth again to gaze upon the old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at the fantastic ignorance of the old sculptors; examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid; but do not mock at them, for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure; but which it must be the first aim of all Europe at this day to regain for her children.

The literature of architecture is immense, but the only writers of genius whose architectural creeds have inspired them to write literary masterpieces are Ruskin and Geoffrey Scott. Scott's *The Architecture of Humanism*¹ is a brilliant reply to Ruskin's attack on the Renaissance, but Ruskin was surely right when he contended that Renaissance architecture expressed the revolt of pagan pride against Christian humility, and of pagan infidelity against Christian faith. The Venice of the Gothic Ducal Palace had not begun to question the Christian truths. The Venice of the Palace Rez-

¹ Constable, 1924.

zonico was already half pagan. The same change can be discerned in art. 'In old times, men used their powers of painting to show the objects of faith; in later times, they used the objects of faith that they might show their powers of painting.'

'Ruskin,' wrote Horatio Brown, who knew Venice as few have known her, 'carried his theories further than history, faithfully studied, would warrant, but in most cases he had reason on his side. It may be doubted if the year 1418 and the death of Carlo Zeno mark categorically the point at which the history of Venice begins to decline and fall; but, on the other hand, the transition from the Gothic style to that of the Renaissance undoubtedly coincides with a radical change in the character of the Venetian people and the views and aspirations of the Republic.'

'Those two adversaries,' writes Mr. Quennell, 'the Moralist and the Aesthete, battled for supremacy in the depths of Ruskin's nature,' but surely it is a trifle old-fashioned to write as if the Aesthete was necessarily an a-moralist. Proust, in his essay on Ruskin, repudiates as decisively as Ruskin the doctrine of art for art's sake, and the late Geoffrey Scott, that urbane humanist and by far the most effective critic of Ruskin's identification of the Renaissance with paganism, ranges himself with Ruskin against all those who seek, as Mr. Quennell apparently seeks, a complete divorce between aesthetic and ethical standards. 'For in the last resort,' writes Mr. Scott, 'great art will be distinguished from that which is merely aesthetically clever by a nobility that in its final analysis is moral; or, rather, the nobility which in life we call moral, is itself aesthetic . . . The "dignity" of architecture is the same "dignity" that we recognize in character.'

The rediscovery of Ruskin among young intellectuals is largely due to the influence of Proust's famous essay.

'We can forget,' wrote Proust, 'the services which he rendered to Hunt, to Rossetti, to Millais; but we cannot forget what he did for Giotto, for Caparccio, for Bellini. His divine work was not to raise up the living but to revive the dead. *Son oeuvre divine ne fut pas de susciter des vivants, mais de ressusciter des morts.*'

Ruskin did not inaugurate the Gothic Revival, which had begun before the turn of the century, and his influence on that revival was not wholly felicitous. Indeed he described the neo-Venetian Gothic buildings as 'accursed Frankenstein monsters of indirectly my own making'. Ruskin's *oeuvre divine* found expression, not in his influence on contemporary architecture, but in his inter-

pretation of the past. There are still many people to whom Gothic does not appeal, but Ruskin has made it impossible for any educated person to use the word 'Gothic' as the equivalent for uncouth or barbaric. No man made a greater contribution than John Ruskin to the revolution in taste which opened the eyes of the blind to the glory not only of our Gothic but also of our Byzantine heritage.

'Of all the towns in Italy,' wrote Gibbon to his stepmother on 22 April, 1765, 'I am the least satisfied with Venice. Objects which are only singular without being pleasing produce a momentary surprise which soon gives way to satiety and disgust. Old, and in general, ill-built houses, ruined pictures, and stinking ditches, dignified with the pompous denomination of canals, a fine bridge spoilt by two rows of houses upon it, and a large square decorated with the worst architecture I ever saw.' The 'worst architecture' is the Byzantine St. Mark's, and the Gothic Ducal Palace. Disraeli agreed with Gibbon. In *Contarini Fleming* he expressed his admiration for the Renaissance buildings and his dislike of the 'barbarous although picturesque buildings called the Ducal Palace'.

The eighteenth-century attitude to Byzantine architecture prevailed until Ruskin wrote *The Stones of Venice*. 'The architecture of St. Mark's at Venice,' wrote the *Daily News* reviewer, 'has from of old been the butt for students . . . but Mr. Ruskin comes and assures us . . .'

Ruskin is one of the few people who have had a decisive influence both on aesthetic taste and also on politics. His politics and his artistic ideals reinforced each other. He initiated a scheme for providing a national fund for the purchase of art treasures and he was also active in instituting people's concerts. The revival of pageantry owes much to Ruskin but he was equally concerned to campaign for old age pensions and super tax.

The National Trust and measures to ensure access to mountains enjoyed his powerful support. Ruskin was the greatest Victorian apostle of Christian Socialism, in the proper sense of that much-abused word, for the essential difference between Christian and Marxist Socialism is that the reconciliation of the classes is the ideal of the former, class warfare of the latter. Similarly there is the Christian Democracy of the Saint, which is based on compassion and humility, 'You are as good as I am,' and the secular Democracy of the average sinner which is based on envy and pride, 'I'm as good as you are.'

Ruskin had no sympathy whatever with the kind of proletarian iconoclasm which vents its fury on works of art because they enshrine the aristocratic tradition of a leisure class, and which exploits the opportunities offered not only by revolution but also by war and civil war to destroy the heritage of the past. There is a passage in *Praeterita* in which Ruskin states with gentle irony the case against such iconoclasm. As a boy he travelled round England with his father, who went the round of his country customers.

I thus saw nearly all the noblemen's houses in England; in reverent and healthy delight of uncovetous admiration . . . perceiving that it would not make Brunswick Square in the least more pleasantly habitable to pull Warwick Castle down. And at this day, though I have kind invitations enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles.

He described himself as 'a Communist of the old school—reddest of the red', but he does not seem to have been accepted as such by Marx and Engels, perhaps because the Paris Commune which aroused the enthusiasm of Marx, caused very little pleasure to Ruskin. *The Times* had reported the burning of the Louvre, which in fact survived, and also the destruction of the Palais des Tuileries, the Palais de Justice, and the Hôtel de Ville with its priceless treasures of Art.

Nor can it be less sufficiently encouraging to you [he writes] to see how with a sufficiently curative quantity of Liberty, you may defend yourselves against all danger of over-production, especially in art . . . we Communists of the old school think that our property belongs to everybody and everybody's property to us; so of course I thought the Louvre belonged to me as much as to the Parisians, and expected they would have sent word over to me, being an Art Professor, to ask whether I wanted it burnt down. But no message or intimation to that effect ever reached me.

This passage illustrates the irony which the last of the Hebrew prophets shared with his great predecessors. The utterances of a prophet are often distinguished by irony and even by wit, but less often by humour, for as Ruskin observes, 'he whose heart is at once fixed upon heaven, and open to earth so as to apprehend the importance of heavenly doctrine and the compass of human sorrow, has little disposition for mirth'. To his publisher, Mr. George Smith, Ruskin wrote on 28 October, 1846, 'I ought before to have thanked you for your obliging present of *Wit and Humour*—two characters of intellect in which I am so eminently deficient,

as never even to have ventured upon a conjecture respecting their real nature.' The irony is clear, and there is something very attractive in the contemptuous pride with which Ruskin disclaims the possession of the one quality with which even the dreariest of bores so often believe themselves to be endowed. Humour which is at a discount in creative centuries is absurdly overpraised in an age of disillusion and artistic decay, as if it were the one thing left to brag about.

As a social reformer Ruskin was a pioneer who fought with unwearying tenacity for things which we take for granted today.

In 1860 when Ruskin began to develop his theories there was nothing particularly unusual in the fact that a woman could die of exposure after giving birth to a child on the banks of a canal. In 1860 there was no eight-hour day, no early-closing, no old-age pensions and no free State elementary education, and also of course 'no free false teeth with nothing to bite on'.

Against the heresy that God might reign but must never be allowed to rule Ruskin never ceased to protest with what Carlyle called 'his divine rage against iniquity, falseness and baseness'. *Laissez-faire* Liberalism never recovered from his attacks. He declared that he knew of 'no previous instance in history of a nation's establishing a systematic disobedience to the first principles of its professed religion'. In his insistence that man has only a just title to such property as he can skilfully use, 'property to whom proper', he anticipated many of the social doctrines developed by Mr. Hilaire Belloc in that most prophetic of books, *The Servile State*.

Mr. Quennell has much that is interesting to say about Ruskin's peculiar brand of Christian Socialism, and is effective in his attack on the readiness of many Victorians to acquiesce in horrors which *The Times* described as 'the result of nature's simplest laws'. But whereas we are shocked by the reluctance of the Victorians to legislate against such evils, they would be equally shocked by a certain type of modern progressive, who satisfies his social conscience by denouncing the rich rather than by giving his own money to the poor. I remember an old Victorian describing to me the moment of his conversion from his youthful Radicalism to Conservatism. He was with a group of Radical friends who were discussing an appeal for a hospital to which my friend had subscribed. 'I shan't give a penny,' one of his friends announced, 'hospitals ought to be run by the State'—a sentiment which was cordially echoed by his friends.

Qui suadet sua det was the principle on which Ruskin acted. He managed to get rid of almost all his inherited wealth, mainly in personal and public charity, before he died. Mr. Wilenski gives full details of these bequests. Mr. Quennell is content to mention, in a bleak footnote, that Ruskin by the 'end of his life had almost divested himself of his inherited wealth'. When Ruskin was attacking privileges, Socialism was not the key to office and public patronage. On the contrary, *The Cornhill* under Thackeray declined to print the final instalment of *Unto This Last*, and Ruskin's subversive political doctrines evoked storms of protest.

After a brief eclipse Ruskin's reputation stands higher today than ever. The revived interest in the eminent Victorians is nowhere greater than in the case of Ruskin. After the First World War Proust's brilliant essay set a fashion which has been followed by many brilliant authors. Ruskin is not the monopoly of any particular school. He is appreciated by Catholics and agnostics, Conservatives and Socialists. Workers too poor to buy his book *Unto This Last* copied it out word for word; distinguished Europeans learned English especially to read it: Tolstoy was most deeply impressed by it, and Gandhi once stated that it changed his life. And in 1906, when a questionnaire as to what books had influenced them most was issued to the Labour M.P.s in the new Parliament, *Unto This Last* appeared in the greatest number of replies.

Ruskin appeals not only to ardent disciples but also to urbane sceptics who are unconverted by his eloquence but enchanted by his style. 'It was the moral fervour in Ruskin,' writes Sir Max Beerbohm, 'that gave such intensity to his noble style. By reason of it he is, just as a writer, worth a hundred of philosophical gents like you and me. It narrowed him as a thinker and put him again and again in the wrong. But how gloriously wrong and narrow he was. And when he was right, how divinely! I wish we were a little like him.'

In the case of Ruskin as of all great prophets we must distinguish between the substance and the accidents of his message. His immature strictures will be forgotten, as Ruskin who revised many of them would wish them to be forgotten, but 'the main body of Ruskin's thought will become,' as Derrick Leon predicts, 'part of the integral outlook of a people when their superficial criteria have crumbled into dust. For the main body of Ruskinian thought has the structure of eternity. It can afford to wait.'

BOOK REVIEWS

KNOX ON ENTHUSIASM

Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion. By R. A. Knox. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 30s.)

THE secret is out. The large work that for many years Mgr. Knox has been suspected of having in preparation is now published. No more elegantly produced volume has ever come from the Clarendon Press than Knox on *Enthusiasm*; its elegance perfectly complements the urbane prose; and it is pleasant to see above the august imprint of the Press the simple designation of the author: R. A. Knox, Honorary Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. John Henry Newman, too, passed from the seeming breadth of the Establishment to what was in the judgement of many Englishmen the narrowness and obscurity of the 'Italian Mission', and it was Trinity which made a reconciling gesture to the aged Cardinal; but I do not think that Newman's published work as a Catholic ever achieved the imprint of the University's Press. That Mgr. Knox's most considerable work—apart, that is, from his translation of the Bible—should bear this imprint symbolizes, as in a different way do the walls of Blackfriars and Campion Hall, the great change that has come about since the days of Newman in the social and intellectual situation of English Catholics.

In his dedicatory preface to *Enthusiasm* Mgr. Knox tells us that he has been writing the book for more than thirty years. It has been the companion of his working life and the solace of his leisure hours. (Berridge, the Methodist, whose spirited remarks on the topic of marriage for evangelists Mgr. Knox quotes with some gusto, would have been quick to point the moral of this.) As we might expect, we gain from it a lively impression of the personality of the author (if one who has not the pleasure of knowing him may be so bold as to say this). The theologian who divides the gold from the dross in a hundred doctrines, the satirist and wit who cannot resist, confronted with the pious, rich, and masterful women who so frequently have a special rôle in the coming to be of enthusiasms, calling up the ghosts of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Proudie, even the writer of detective stories—for what is the history of

Jansenism but a problem for this special talent?—all three blend in the personality of the author; and, as in all such minglings, the final product is more than the sum of its constituent parts. Before such richness as is here displayed the reviewer might be excused were he to point the way to the feast, draw attention in general terms to the quality of the dishes and the wines, and, wishing the reader a good appetite, leave him to his enjoyment.

The method of the book is inductive. Although the first chapter gives us a sketch of the essentials of enthusiasm, as an attitude and as giving rise to doctrines, devotional practices, and institutions, one conjectures that this chapter was among the last to be written. In the beginning the author seems to have suspected the existence of a certain spiritual kinship between Montanism and Donatism, the many heresies of the Middle Ages, the Anabaptists of the Reformation period, the early Quakers, Jansenism and Quietism, the Camisards (who provoked Shaftesbury's *Letter concerning Enthusiasm*, incorrectly referred to by Mgr. Knox as *Essay on Enthusiasm*) and the convulsionaries of Saint-Médard, the Moravians, the Methodists. As movement after movement is surveyed we notice curious historical parallels—the rôle of the *grande dame* from Priscilla and Maximilla, the converts of Montanus, to Selina Countess of Huntingdon is one of the most singular but by no means the only one—and, more important, common trends in spirituality and a common temper. Gradually the features of enthusiasm become plainer, until, on the verge of the nineteenth century, we can look back upon a single spirit with many avatars. It is not altogether (in the author's view) an evil spirit. It is a compound, as are all heresies, of good and evil, and is very often in its origins an unexceptionable reaction to whatever of worldliness and *niaiserie* and downright vice has come to encrust ecclesiastical institutions. Schism and heresy proceed from the spirit of pride which readily infects small devout groups of reformers. Rapidly, from a group of reformers within the Church, they are transformed into *une petite église*; and once the tiny church within the Church has crystallized it has in the end to dissolve or to fall into schism. Once in schism, it becomes institutionalized itself, thus provoking a fresh splitting off; and yet another sect is born. This is the general pattern; but there are variations. Sometimes the enthusiasm become an institution ends as a social fossil, as with the Dutch Jansenists of our own day. The general pattern of development is applicable not only to enthusiasms which lead to schism from the Catholic Church, but also to enthusiasms such as Methodism which begin as reforming movements within the Protestant State churches. If one wanted to sum up enthusiasts in a phrase one might say that they are those who, believing themselves to be 'pneumatic' men, will not allow that 'psychic' men, too, have their place within the Church and may be redeemed. Nevertheless, enthusiasm ought not to be an occasion for the orthodox

to pride themselves that they are not as these enthusiasts, for what an enthusiasm emphasizes at the expense of other truths is all the same a truth and probably a truth to which many of the faithful are insensitive.

If we would interpret [enthusiasm] rightly, there is one point that must be seized on above all the rest—in itself enthusiasm is not a wrong tendency but a false emphasis. Quietism exaggerates only a little the doctrine of the mystics about simplicity in prayer, about disinterested love. Quakerism does but enthrone in dangerous isolation the truth of God's presence within us. Jansenism is the vigilant conscience of Christendom overshadowed by a scruple. Methodism is the call back to Christ in an age of Deism. What men like Pascal, Fénelon, and Wesley saw clearly was something true and something valuable; the exaggerations, the eccentricities, were hatched by the heat of controversy. The sympathy which those names evoke is not the index of a rebel spirit in us, who read of them; it is not because they fell foul of authority, and imperilled unity, that we attribute to them greatness. It is not surprising if those who are most sensitive to the needs of their age find their way, sometimes, on to the wrong side of the calendar. Fine instruments are easily spoiled.

The core of the book is made up of the chapters on Jansenism, Quietism, and Methodism. Here the published literature is abundant, and the author is completely at home with his authorities. One would hesitate to say that on such subjects his treatment is definitive; but his judgements are in general balanced and sympathetic; his treatment of the enigma of Quietism, the most delicate problem of all, for it seems impossible to applaud the condemnation of Quietism without appearing to look coldly upon perfectly orthodox mysticism, is illuminating and judicious. His study of Wesley (a heart Catholic by nature, if ever there was one—one wishes Mgr. Knox had dwelt more on the glorious hymns, so much of a piece with Catholic *pietas*) is penetrating. Here and there one might wish slightly to shift the balance of the picture; the judgement on Molinos is perhaps too assured; pieces of foolishness that might well be paralleled in the lives of some Catholic saints are at times fastened with too triumphant an air to the portraits of the best of the Jansenists. In only one case (in these central chapters) does one feel that Mgr. Knox seriously fails to do justice to his subject. The case is that of Pascal. The difficulty is that if Pascal is treated simply as a character in the drama of Port Royal his astonishing genius, which speaks with such eloquence to the condition of our own age, is necessarily obscured. Pascal transcends the politics of Jansenism.

It is perhaps unfortunate that for the sake of completeness the chapters on mediaeval heresies and on English Protestantism in the seventeenth century have been included. Mediaeval heresy cannot be

treated adequately—is scarcely intelligible—without a deeper study of mediaeval social and economic life than we are given; and the enthusiasm represented by ‘the giant figure of George Fox’ (as Mgr. Knox rightly describes him) and the early Friends cannot be *placed* unless it is shown as a part of that world to which the Levellers and Diggers also belonged. On both these subjects much work has been done in the past fifty years; but Mgr. Knox makes no reference to such standard works as those by Troeltsch and Tawney and seems to have missed the Clarke Papers, which contain material of capital importance for any study of enthusiasm in the seventeenth century. Of course, all this is only to say that in these particular fields the work of Mgr. Knox is that of a devoted amateur; but this is to pay a high compliment and to indicate the peculiar charm of the book. One closes it with the sensation of having spent many hours with the most agreeable of companions and with the wish that the professional historians may come to share more fully the qualities of clarity and wit that distinguish its pages.

‘Detail’ should be ‘denial’ (p. 105); there is a misprint in line 11 of p. 556; the argument touching Platonism and Aristotelianism on pp. 578 and 579 does not make sense to the present reviewer, who cannot recognize as Platonism what the author presents under that guise; perhaps the argument could be recast to make it clearer or more plausible.

J. M. CAMERON

JAMES JOYCE

James Joyce's Dublin. By Patricia Hutchins. (Grey Walls Press. 15s.)

THIS picture-book should be of interest to anyone for whom the art of Joyce means anything at all. Joyce's art was of that kind of greatness which inevitably occasions an attendant ‘literature’ and *James Joyce's Dublin* is a welcome addition to such a literature.

I have called it a picture-book. Actually text and illustrations are about equally divided in its hundred or more pages, but picture-book it is—a book of pictures of place and site; for the most part photographs of Edwardian Dublin. It might very properly have had for its sub-title ‘Northmen's thing made southfolk's place’. I looked immediately for a photograph of Suffolk Place, but was disappointed, and then I looked for ‘Waterhouse's clogh’, but was again disappointed. But there is on page 34 ‘the fiendish park’ and on page 32 the Shelbourne Hotel and George II ‘on his statue riding the high horse there forehengist’, and on page 47 a quite beautiful photograph of ‘St. Stephen's, my green’, and on page 95 a photograph of Eccles Street, one of the most important sites in *Ulysses*. Next I looked for the ‘Poolbeg flasher’—not alas! recorded. However, a well-chosen close-up of ‘emties’ out-

side Mulligan's in Poolbeg Street on page 108 was a compensation. On page 116, facing, appropriately enough, four photographs of Joyce in Switzerland, there is an extremely attractive picture of Anna Livia herself, whether 'down by the dykes of killing Kildare' or in 'County Wickenlow, garden of Erin' I do not know, for I am not familiar enough with the topography of Ireland, but certainly there is sufficient in this photograph to recall 'one venersderg in junojuly oso sweet and so cool and so limber she looked'.

Along with such illustrations of site and place there are others bearing on the artist's biography such as photographic-reproductions of an early essay in the college magazine *St. Stephen's*, and a post-card and a letter showing his handwriting, etc.; but in this brief notice I shall confine myself to this business of site. Not only because site, vis-à-vis the artist, is the subject of this little book, but because of all artists ever, James Joyce was the most dependent on the particular, on place, site, locality. His lifelong exile served only to sharpen, clarify and deepen his devotion to the *numina* of place, not of any place, but of this place, Eblana . . . '*Hircus Civis Eblanensis*,' his natal place. Never, perhaps, has such absorption with a microcosm been the means of showing forth the macrocosmic realities. He is the most incarnational of artists.

If it is true that our business here below is to make the universal shine out from the particular, then among twentieth-century artists there is no doubt that 'Fr. James Joyce has made hares of them all!' For this achievement I would suggest that certain accidents were prerequisite and certain conditioning factors necessary.

One is obliquely reminded of some of these desiderata by a casual glance at the illustrations in this book. For the Joycean achievement, his medium had to be English, because that language is the lingua franca of today. (Cf. Bismarck's awareness, eighty years ago, of the all-determining fact that New York spoke English.) But if the medium had to be English the cultural and mythological content had to be European and West European, at that. Which means that nothing less than a proper understanding of the Catholic mind, would serve; including both an understanding of the dogmatic and scholastic modes of thought together with an inward understanding of a traditional, popular, rooted, vulgar, Catholic practice, sufficiently linked with the life of a land, of a *specific* countryside, and thus with the pre-Christian and immemorial thought-patterns of a genuine 'folk'. And all this again linked with, encroached upon, and largely corrupted by, a modern industrial slum-culture and a saloon-bar folk-lore; for preference that of a sea-port and again for preference in a locality influenced to some measure both actually and traditionally by the New World beyond 'Brendan's herring pool'. Again, for preference, with a Celtic hinterland, because the Celtic deposits incorporated pre-Celtic ones and these together underlie the Germanic-Latin fusion, and this whole amalgam is the

West. Further again, with the tradition of neo-classicism, not so much of the Renaissance but of the eighteenth century, of the lexicons and the humanities and the college greens, and yet again with the 'Germanic' scientific scholarship of more immediate decades, of the 'higher criticisms', of the world of anthropologists, etymologists, comparative-culture historians and all the rest that has so influenced the thought-forms of all of us who are past middle age today.

Moreover, with regard to the English medium mentioned above it is required that this 'English' should be of a kind with a sturdy tradition of its own, an English less emasculated, less flattened out, less affected by Education Acts, if idiosyncratic yet preserving a purity of form. If, as to background, these are some of the probable desiderata, where more likely would the location of that background be than somewhere within the Anglo-Celtic fringe? and where within that area, if not Dublin?

Just as we are bound to believe that for the great supernatural penetrations into history there was preparation, slow conditioning, interaction of all sorts and makings ready, in place, for the appointed person or time; so I think, on an infinitely lower plane, a complex of 'accidents' make possible the conditions necessary for those very few great artists who occupy as it were junctional or terminal positions. Such an artist I believe James Joyce to have been. As for his exile from the 'site'—it seems to me that too was a pre-condition. Also it would seem providential that he did not leave 'Dear Dirty Dumpling' to go west to 'Markland's vinelands' but east in the footsteps of the great Irish scholars of the Dark Ages, to work within the boundaries of the Old Roman World: that clearly was essential.

On page 93 there is a photograph of an interior—an interior very familiar to us Catholics—a neo-Gothic parish church, like many another. It is the church at Sandymount dedicated to the Star of the Sea. Underneath this photograph is one of a postcard sent by Joyce from Trieste in 1920 to his aunt Josephine in Dublin. It reads:

Thanks for card received. Will you please send me a bundle of novelettes and any penny hymn books you can find as I need them? All are well here except myself. Another thing I wanted to know is whether there are trees (and of what kind) behind the Star of the Sea Church in Sandymount visible from the shore and also whether there are steps leading down at the side of it from Leahy's Terrace. If you can find out these facts for me quickly I shall be glad. Renewed wishes for 1920 from all here.

Jim.

On page 92, Miss Hutchins, with reference to this card, says: 'In *Ulysses* mention is made of these steps which have since disappeared. "And among the five young trees a hoisted linstock lit the lamp in

Leahy's Terrace." These trees are still there but the Star of the Sea has no ivy on it.'

If nothing but this postcard from Trieste to Dublin remained of the material relating to the writing of *Ulysses* we should have a pretty good idea of the kind of artist Joyce was. He had not learned in vain from the scholastics' 'We proceed from the known to the unknown'. The concrete, the exact dimensions, the contactual, the visual, the bodily, what the senses register, the assembled data first—then is the 'imagination' freed to get on with the job. The vague, the fanciful, the generalized have no place. No padding, no guesses, no effect-making, still less the slovenly, the slack, the jerrybuilt and the bogus. This much might be inferred from this postcard alone.

The last paragraph of this book ends with the words: 'Joyce talked of the three things St. Thomas Aquinas declared were needed for beauty, "wholeness, harmony and radiance", and then in exile achieved them.' There is a certain licence very rightly permitted to tributes, and we find it particularly distasteful to query this tribute, but on reflexion, would it not be more exact and therefore all the more congruent with Joyce's art, to say that it proceeded, *qua* art, toward such an achievement at certain levels? As artist, he was orientated, as fixedly as needle to north, on the end to which a work of art should proceed, namely: wholeness, harmony, radiance. And in some passages the perfection of the art, as such, does pre-eminently evoke those very qualities. No one, unless by prejudice, could I think deny this, after listening to the fragment from *Anna Livia* on the record issued over twenty years ago by the committee of the Orthographical Institute. They did us a great service in making that record, for, like any *bard*, Joyce has to be heard to be believed. In this he was indeed of the Celtic tradition.

DAVID JONES

THE DIVINE PLAN OF SALVATION

Revelation and the Modern World. By L. S. Thornton, C.R. (Dacre Press. A. & C. Black. 30s.)

Catholicism. By Henri de Lubac, S.J. Translated by Lancelot C. Sheppard. (Burns Oates. 15s.)

Roman Catholicism. By Thomas Corbishley, S.J., M.A. (Hutchinson's University Library. 7s. 6d.)

THESE books were written with different aims, even for different classes of readers, but they are all concerned fundamentally with the same theme: the unity of the divine plan of salvation, giving a perfect continuity to the upheavals of history and embracing in a lofty har-

mony the wild prodigality of nature and the uncertain choices of men. With the concrete realization of the plan they are occupied in varying degrees and the nature of the community to which it is committed becomes more specific as we turn from the first to the second on the list, still more from the second to the third; they are, therefore, complementary to one another. Dr. Thornton's is the greatest of them.

The distinction between the natural and the supernatural is real and as a result of it we can reach by reason alone perfectly valid conclusions about the soul of man in which grace resides and about the laws of the universe destined to make way for the new heaven and earth. Such investigations must continue to be pursued and those who make them in the right spirit will gain no small degree of merit thereby. Nevertheless what is really important is the supernatural end to which all things are directed and the grace-endowed spirit whom all nature serves. The origin and end are the same: nature, as Urs von Balthasar recently reminded a gathering of philosophers, is derived from supernatural; it is also there for the sake of the elect. From creation to the end of time and into eternity we are preserved in being by the Trinity, from the beginning man was enlightened by the Word and sanctified by the Spirit and at the end in the fellowship of Christ he will but enjoy the fullness of that light and have attained the perfection of the same holiness. All other themes are subordinate to this, the persistent teaching of the Scriptures and therefore pre-eminently the subject-matter of theology. 'At the heart of the theological issue today lies the problem of Revelation,' writes Dr. Thornton (p. 129); it is in fact the whole content of theology and the aspect from which the theologian approaches his study, revealed truths are the material object of theology and their character as revealed the formal object.

We may make a distinction between revelation as 'the mode of divine activity by which the Creator communicates himself to man' (p. 194) and religion as man's response, but they are one in Christ, 'the Whole in whom the divine image is perfectly shown' (p. 171), 'the organism of revelation . . . in its wholeness and in its unity; it is the embodied response of the Son, in whom alone the Father stands revealed' (p. 224). It is 'within this new world of filial response to divine paternity' that all images are re-hallowed and all things re-born (p. 251, n. 4).

There is nothing that escapes the mark of the redemptive plan, everything is there to be caught up into it, and 'no single fact, however strange and bizarre, is irrelevant' (p. 49). To outward appearance early Judaism, which we acknowledge to be a 'revealed religion' and a prelude to Christianity, was only a little less crude than the nature religions which it so fiercely—and rightly—opposed but to which it was also indebted. Paul in his turn was formed by the Torah which he proclaimed to be obsolete and, maintaining intact the heritage of

Christ, he accepted the providential purpose of the religions of Greece and Rome. From another standpoint we can see how all nature is summed up in man, while man himself, 'the meeting-point of nature and history' (p. 193), looks to the deeds wrought in time as manifestations of the God to whom he is already drawn by love. Nor is that love the simple and spontaneous urge of his spiritual nature: grace cannot but come into it, that grace by which he was touched from the beginning when he was made in the image of God and predestined to a glory beyond nature in which history also finds its dynamic completion. This majestic unity of the divine scheme is finely drawn by a theologian perfectly at ease in the scriptural and patristic sources and with apt and impressive use of language and style.

Through the exact phrases and the precise theological terminology there appears also, not only a deep understanding, but a great love of the Church. It is the term of continuity from Israel through Christ, but not a third stage in the history of salvation. It is Israel renewed, it is Christ, and the redeemed community makes the response of the Son in whom all are re-created:

As Christ is both the way and the truth, so also he is the life. He is not only the object sought by faith, but also the sphere in which the believer lives, the Body of which the Christian seeker is already a member. This scriptural phraseology identifies the redeemed community, including alike its constituent members and their common tradition, with him in whom the fullness of truth is given. But this language of newly-bestowed organic identity also reminds us that revelation is creative, and that the Creator-Word has re-created us in himself, in order that by inclusion within his filial response we may have access to the Father. It is a recurring theme of the Epistle to the Ephesians that access to the Father takes place in the one Body through knowledge of him who, being Head of the Body, is also God's only Son. Thus we are admitted not only to the *locus* of revelation, but also to its wholeness, and that through identification with the Son in his wholeness of response (pp. 34-5).

Nor is this a mere ideal; a visible community is necessary, 'because without the embodiment of our Saviour in Christendom he must ever remain hidden from the world' (p. 226). But it is sad to find that this embodiment includes even human contradictions and is subject to the laws of human deterioration (cf. p. 63), that the scandalous disruption of Christendom 'penetrates to the centre, to the heart of the sanctuary' (p. 102). Where then is the vision of Christ pervading the universe? In the long list of scriptural references which are here the subject of illuminating comment Matthew xvi, 18, does not appear.

Dr. Thornton, following St. Paul, has a good deal to say about the 'proportion (*analogia*) of the faith'. This might be regarded as the whole

subject of Père de Lubac's book and it means that—to quote our Anglican authority again—'a Christian does not receive individually an unlimited endowment of graces. For grace is given according to need; and the supreme need is that each should fulfil his appointed function in the Body' (p. 232). *Catholicism* covers the same ground mainly as *Revelation and the Modern World*, displays the same understanding of Scripture and draws even more fully on patristic thought, to present the unity and wholeness of God's plan.

'For her the world was made', we read in the *Pastor* of Hermas: the reason for the Church need not be sought, says Père de Lubac; she is the reason of everything else that is created. The real meaning of Catholicism is therefore not the absorption of as many individuals as possible, it is simply that there is nothing outside the influence of the Church, nothing that she does not in some way mould to herself. The instrumentality of the elements of the world in the scheme of salvation is thus emphasized as much in this book as in the other; the *wholeness* of Christ in His members is here also brought out.

Père de Lubac, always quick to appreciate the consequences of dogma, develops his theme in a manner that enables him to face the urgent problems of humanity on the quest of salvation. For all his generous outlook, especially to those who are not to be regarded as 'damned outside the Church', but 'saved by the Church alone' (p. 118), there is no doubt in his mind of the sanctity and unity in truth of the visible Church. In spite of a sentence which scarcely seems consistent with the teaching of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*—'The Church, without being exactly co-extensive with the Mystical Body, is not adequately distinct from it' (pp. 27-8)—the Catholicism he describes is also Roman.

The long series of extracts from mainly patristic sources, given at the end of the book, will be read with gratitude by the many to whom for linguistic or merely geographical reasons they would otherwise be inaccessible. We must be grateful also for the excellent translation of a delicately written work; but while many footnotes have been wisely excised, it is disappointing to be left occasionally without any indication of the source of a quotation.

With a truly extraordinary combination of tact, frankness and literary grace Fr. Corbishley has accomplished an extremely difficult task. The purpose of the series in which *Roman Catholicism* appears is to enlighten, but not to provide a work of apologetics: the readers merely seek information, not conversion. At university level too much cannot be taken for granted, but an over-popular presentation would be unsuitable. This concise, eminently readable and forthright account of the Church's structure and belief should meet the need exactly.

EDWARD QUINN

PASCAL'S PENSÉES

Pascal's Pensées. Bilingual Edition by H. F. Stewart. (Routledge & Kegan Paul. 215.)

PASCAL died at the age of thirty-nine. He left behind a bundle of manuscripts to which the editors of Port-Royal gave the title *Pensées sur la Religion et sur quelques autres Sujets*. The book appeared in 1670, nine years after Pascal's death. Since then each generation has re-edited it. Condorcet, Voltaire tried their hand, but it took more than 170 years until a scientific treatment of Pascal's manuscripts was evolved. From Cousin to Brunschvicg' *minor*, which accompanied us in our youth, the long series of Pascal exegesis has never ended. H. F. Stewart, the author of the present edition, could still use Tourneur's transcription of the *Pensées*, but he unfortunately died before M. Lafuma's edition appeared. Undoubtedly Tourneur and Lafuma are the most erudite of Pascal experts and it is doubtful whether the publishers who announce Dr. Stewart's work as the standard edition of Pascal's *Pensées* might have chosen this characterization, had they been informed of the existence of Lafuma's edition.

Dr. Stewart bases his arrangement exclusively on Filleau de la Chaise's well known *Discours* on Pascal's *Apology*. The same method has been applied by Jacques Chevalier in his edition of *Pascal's Pensées*. Yet the latter's arrangement differs considerably from the present one. In my opinion Chevalier's edition is more fluent and has the advantage of a running commentary written by an eminent philosopher. Moreover, Chevalier has added to his edition an indispensable analytical table of more than thirty pages, whereas the index in Dr. Stewart's edition is so short that it is practically useless. For instance, a reader looking for the important fragment on Descartes would have to wade through Stewart's entire volume in order to find these fragments:

Écrire contre ceux qui approfondissent trop les sciences. Descartes. Je ne puis pardonner Descartes: il aurait bien voulu, dans toute sa philosophie, pouvoir se passer de Dieu. . . . Descartes inutile et incertain.

It is also surprising that Stewart's edition has no table of concordance, without which no comparison with other editions of the *Pensées* is possible.

To base an edition of the *Pensées* on Filleau de la Chaise is feasible, as the example of Chevalier has proved. Filleau de la Chaise, as a member of the Editorial Committee set up by Port-Royal with the intention of preparing the publication of Pascal's manuscripts, had access to the *Copie* 9203, mentioned in Stewart's edition (p. xx), though in a distorted form; if one considers this fact Filleau de la Chaise's

'memory' as a participant of Pascal's lecture given in 1658 at Port-Royal, where he expounded the plan of *Apology* seems less surprising than Stewart has been led to assume. Had he lived to see M. Lafuma's edition it is questionable whether he would have presented the *Pensées* in their present form.

Even Chevalier's edition is now outdated since the publication of Lafuma's work, which must be regarded as the standard edition of the *Pensées* at present. Lafuma has proved without any possibility of error that twenty-seven chapters of the *Copie* 9203 have been classified by Pascal himself. It therefore seems to me an unacceptable editorial principle to destroy this classification and to construct an *Apology* which was never written by Pascal. M. Béguin, who wrote the introduction to Lafuma's *Recherches Pascalienues* (Paris, 1949), wisely indicates a possible compromise between the *Pensées* and Pascal's unfinished *Apology*. He writes:

L'édition Chevalier, avec les erreurs qui discerne l'oeuil averti de M. Lafuma, est un modèle de ce que peut-être un classement des Pensées obtenu par la critique interne. Remaniée en tenant compte des découvertes de M. Lafuma, cette édition me paraît pouvoir devenir 'la meilleure possible' à l'heure où nous sommes.

I very much regret to say that serious students of Pascal will have to use Chevalier and Lafuma. Both editions have clear concordance tables and elaborate indices. The present edition testifies to a lifelong devotion to Pascal's work, but, as an instrument of entering into the complexities of the *Pensées*, I cannot recommend the volume.

So much about the editorial problems arising from this new edition. Whatever may be the final form of this great book, its virulence will continue to guide many future generations through uncertainty and sorrow. This unique book, the greatest perhaps the human mind has ever produced, shows how man would remain in misery without God. Without God he is unable to create a just social order. He destroys himself and his fellow-men in wars and other absurdities:

Pourquoi me tuez-vous? Eh quoi? ne demeurez-vous pas de l'autre côté de l'eau? Mon ami, si vous demeuriez de ce côté, je serais un assassin et cela serait injuste de vous tuer de la sorte; mais puisque vous demeurez de l'autre côté, je suis un brave, et cela est juste.

Or man loses himself in *divertissements*. We can no longer stay in one room alone. We must go to cocktail parties; see films; enjoy ourselves; have 'a good time'. Only in God can man find happiness, according to Pascal, and specifically in the Catholic religion:

C'est le coeur qui sent Dieu, et non la raison. Voilà ce que c'est que la foi: Dieu sensible au coeur, non à la raison.

If I reflect what has attracted me since my earliest youth to Pascal, it is his restlessness, his infinite subtlety and great art, his independent loneliness, and above all his vehement belief.

J. P. MAYER

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MARCEL

The Mystery of Being. Gifford Lectures for 1949 and 1950. Vol. I. By Gabriel Marcel. (The Harvill Press. 15s.)

THOSE who belong wholeheartedly to the tradition of St. Thomas may ask themselves, perhaps rhetorically, 'What has M. Marcel that we have not? We have an immense fabric incorporating everything in Nature and Grace. We have definition; we have the verdict of reason; we have security; we have great engines of defence.' Here for the moment I will merely bring together a few scattered phrases of M. Marcel:

Philosophy is a help towards discovery rather than a business of strict demonstration. It is round a series of acts of recognition that the body of thought I am trying to present to you will build itself. The result we are working for, the destination, is not already there waiting for us. We cannot possess a notion given in advance of what we are striving for. The philosopher's task involves not so much unusual mental aptitudes as an unusual sense of inner urgent need; and philosophical investigation can be considered as a gathering together of the processes by which I can pass from a situation in which I am at war with myself, to one in which some kind of expectation is satisfied; a line of direction moving along which we have more and more chances of being visited by a spiritual illumination. The *idea of the need* for transcendence is not arrived at by way of *abstract thought*, but grasped through *intimate lived experience*.

Clearly M. Marcel has abandoned the strong-points of traditional Catholic philosophy; he has foresworn her methods, left idle her equipment, her highroads unfrequented, turned his back even on the broad daylight of objective thought. Has philosophy, in his presentation, 'betrayed her own nature, been faithless to her proper standards, assuming the vile ones of a renegade, without at first glance any visible counterbalancing advantages'? (His own words.) Broad generalizations are not very convincing, with rhetoric at hand to falsify. I propose then to put forward a passage from St. Thomas (chosen almost at random) against

which as a background my further general remarks may be found to have reality and definition. It is assembled from Art. XII of the *Question de Anima* (No. IV of the *Quaestiones Disputatae*).

Those who say that the soul is its powers would make the soul the immediate source or principle of its actions; they would have it that from the diversity of his operations is to be discerned in man's soul no more than a purely nominal diversity. This cannot be. For nothing can perform what it does not already in itself possess in act: fire, though bright, would not warm; but being warm, warms. So all things work in their own likeness; the character of a source or principle is to be read in its works. Now in the course of nature, when one thing brings another into being, it does so by working on matter already present, first disposing it to receive, and finally conferring on it, the form whose reception spells substantial generation. Undoubtedly, then, the immediate source of this activity is to be found in an appropriate *accidental* form responsible for the changing *disposition* of the matter; though indeed this form must be said to act as instrument under the power and direction of a substantial form. If, now, there is an agent who by his action directly and immediately produces *substance*, such an agent must act by His essence; in Him will be no distinction between essence and powers. But the powers of the soul relate not to substantial but to accidental changes: to be thinking, to be feeling, are no more than accidental to our substantial being; distinct powers, therefore, are deputed to these functions. Another argument might be drawn from the diversity of the soul's acts. The *understanding* of necessary truths, and mere *reasoning* about contingent fact, involve generic difference and so cannot be ascribed to one and the same immediate principle; they must be the work of distinct powers. The essence of the soul, then, is not the immediate principle of her activities; she works through the mediation of principles accidental to her.

How shall we describe St. Thomas's method? There is the assured magisterial progress from Question to Question. A few leisurely paces and he takes his stand. The movable set is brought up—always the same: the Universe, boldly sketched. Swiftly he rehearses act and potency, matter and form, active qualities, transmutation, generation; *agens agit sibi simile*. The whole scene is set: a vast perspective is before us. At last, with perfect timing, the soul of man is present—perfectly posed in the middle distance under the converging beams of many arcs. And the scene is over. How objective it all is—how external! And the hero, how subdued by his setting! With M. Marcel it is very different. We do not look out on the secular scene, with man a visitor. From the beginning we find ourselves in the midst of the soul, dimly sensing its ambiguous meaning by an interior luminosity. We advance by *finding* things as they are, rather than by *proving* that they must be so.

His method is to discover rather than to demonstrate. He does indeed ask himself: 'What guarantee can I have that this personal progress of mine has anything more than a subjective value—a proper philosophic dignity?' The answer to this is the book.

But what major objective truths, inaccessible to Scholasticism, does M. Marcel in the end establish? I think his answer would be this: I cannot expound in a dialectical system the truths I discover, without the grave risk of falsifying them, for I should have to use the familiar categories of external knowledge shot through with spatial implications. But I can lead you to discover truth from the inside. Truth is not an object, a content, a *product* that can be passed from hand to hand, so to speak: it is a *Spirit*. An analogy may help to suggest this recurring idea. In physical training, action grows supple, balance and rhythm free and eloquent, the body enters into a subtle mastery of movement ready to serve expressively each impulse. But no part of this 'result' can be directly communicated to a body in summary form; it cannot exist apart from the process in which it arose—it is immanent; yet for the original graceless body it may well have seemed transcendent; and by it moreover is won the freedom of a boundless world of beauty. Which recalls M. Marcel's words: 'Transcendent does not mean transcending experience; on the contrary there must be a possibility of having an *experience* of the transcendent as such.'

To return. Will M. Marcel establish, for example, that a material body can or cannot be in two places at the same moment? I should be greatly surprised if he noticed the question. But if a man will make thoughtful progress through the varied situations into which this author will lead him, there will come into being something of great price. From being coiled slothfully in a dark corner his conscience will spread into the far reaches of his being, will become mysteriously in accord with the whole amplitude of being. Although he does not establish a body of theorems adapted to nonchalant broadcast dissemination, he brings the soul to a condition marvellously apt for hearing and receiving the Word. If an objection suggests itself: 'Surely this can only be the fruit of prayer and penance. How should the reading of a profane volume in a secular library bear, instantly, fruit long awaited in Church and cloister?'—I must leave the question open.

The casual reader, with the victorious strokes of St. Thomas in mind, may imagine he detects here and there in the book a nerveless indecision. For example: 'In these illustrations I have always been anxious to flow in the direction of a sort of current, without asking myself precisely what the current is.' In nothing could he be more greatly mistaken; the delicate explorations, the absence of dogmatism give assurance of integrity and validity.

Whether we must choose irrevocably between the Scholastic method in metaphysics with its heavy armour and great weapons, and the

apparently more subjective 'existential' approach—so defenceless against crass denial or sheer incomprehension—remains to be determined. They are contrary notions which may yet be found to be complementary—each essential to a complete counterpoint.

The translation makes very clear and easy reading.

JAMES H. MACMILLAN

THE PROSE OF THE CATHOLIC REFUGEES

Elizabethan Recusant Prose (1559-1582). By A. C. Southern. With a Foreword by H. O. Evennett, Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge. (Sands. 42s.)

THIS valuable and remarkable book fills a great gap in the history of English language. Whoever has studied the chaos of Catholic prose, pamphleteering or devotional, in the Elizabethan period must have longed for such a volume as this which is exactly what it claims to be: a historical and critical account of the books of the Catholic Refugees printed and published abroad and at secret presses in England, together with an annotated bibliography of the same.

This is certainly the Catholic book of the year and incidentally will become indispensable to any library that has any claim to English literary research. To many it will prove like a supplement or long missing volume in the Cambridge History of English Literature.

The most important part is a bibliography of rare Catholic productions gathered from libraries not easily accessible or from such an invaluable collection (now dispersed) as Sir Leicester Harmsworth's. Each entry is made with that minute detail beloved of bibliophiles.

A careful comparison of style, capitals and internal evidence enables the compiler to suggest that the *Treatise of Treasons* was the work of John Leslie, Bishop of Ross. It has been supposed to be a translation of a French tract by de Belleforest concerning Mary Stuart, but Dr. Southern shows that the English version appeared first. Under the name of Gregory Martin appears the famous Rheims New Testament in full collation, which Biblical bookworms will appreciate.

In the section given to 'devotional works' appears a facsimile of the title page of the first Edition of the Rheims N.T. A most interesting thirty pages follow giving a critical history of what must be the greatest Catholic contribution to the continuity and style of the English language. To what extent the Authorized Version owed debts to Rheims is a pretty question, but the different views may be studied in Brooke Foss Westcott and Professor J. S. Phillimore. However grotesque many of the close Latinisms read, there can be no doubt that many readings from Rheims were incorporated in the belauded

Authorized which has so deeply influenced English prose and character. But British sentiment has never allowed credit or gratitude to be given to Gregory Martin. The perennial criticism of the Catholic version (such as has befallen Mgr. Knox also) is that it is the translation of a translation and that the Latin text cannot compare with the Greek. It is interesting to read the late A. W. Pollard as quoted: 'That if St. Jerome worked from better Greek MSS. than any which were known in the sixteenth century, his Latin translation might, at least theoretically, represent the original Greek better than any MSS. used by Erasmus.' Westcott held that the style of the Rheims was unnatural and the phrasing unrhythmical. Phillimore found it was a style and rhythm denied to sister-versions. Gardiner wrote that 'all that was valuable was taken over by the Authorized Version' and Dr. Carleton has stated that the Authorized's 'debt to Roman Catholic Rheims is hardly inferior to her debt to puritan Geneva'. The actual impact of version upon version has been illustrated by over a thousand words and phrases. This was Carleton's considerable contribution to the controversy.

Martin's great value was, according to Gardiner, that 'he was exquisitely sensitive to the shades of meaning in the English words'. This has been illustrated by Carleton in the number of instances where the presence or absence of the Greek Article has been enforced and in the 'due observance of the Greek $\delta\epsilon$ '. It may be said of Martin that like Browning's grammarian he gave $\delta\tau\iota$ its business!

A fascinating chapter deals with the publishers and Presses, which in England had to remain underground. The foreign printers worked in a tongue which they did not understand. It is curious how few are the 'faults escaped'. Those who have worked at these rare productions must remember that foreign printers at the time failed to possess the capitals W and K with the result that the Rheims version has to employ a VV in place. The accounts of the exiled printers, John Fowler of Louvain and John Lion at Rheims, are valuable. To mislead the English authorities, Fowler gave an Antwerp imprint to many books which he printed in Louvain. John Lion's name was put to books secretly printed in England while he was working in Louvain. This Dr. Southern proves chiefly by the presence of the proper W and the ligature sh which were not obtainable on the Continent. So the feints of the persecuted have become food for the modern bibliophile.

In many ways this is a directory and a catalogue, but the many quotations from rare books show that the old Catholic recusants could write a fine straightforward English prose. Joseph Gillow's heroic attempt to make a Bibliographical Dictionary is very incomplete and Dr. Southern has provided the first inclusive guide. Dr. Chambers and Dr. Owst, without being Catholics, have already traced the great tradition of English prose through Catholic channels. The idea that English literature has been a Protestant growth sprouting of its own

accord in Elizabethan times has been shewn to be patently wrong. 'The Roman Catholic prose of the Reformation period has been ignored,' wrote Dr. Chambers. Professor Phillimore believed English prose had remained where More left it until Dryden civilized it. 'The true mainstream of English tradition in prose was in the line of Parsons, Campion, Allen.'

All three are well represented in this book for which Allen's features supply the frontispiece.

Elizabethan English Prose was inclined to turn into rhetoric and phantasy on one side, whereas the austere and struggling Catholics had only time and opportunity to keep a clear strait stream in constant peril of imprisonment or death. They had not the leisure to become ornate and affected like Lyly, Sidney and even Hooker.

SHANE LESLIE

EUROPEAN HISTORY

The Limits and Divisions of European History. By Oscar Halecki. (Sheed & Ward. 10s. 6d.)

THE extent to which the writing of even the most stringently academic history is bound to be influenced by the historian's own presuppositions, and the extent to which this influence is legitimate will always be hotly debated. There is one kind of influence, however, which the historian cannot hope to eliminate. He must decide in advance where to begin his work, and, at some stage, where to end it. Generally these decisions are made for him by the conventions of the profession, which lay it down that history is divided into certain more or less clearly defined and self-contained compartments. These professional rulings embody judgements about history which must to some extent arise from intuition, but which, once they have gained acceptance, are likely to be acquiesced in until some scholar, himself impelled by intuition, steps into neighbouring territory to prove that the frontiers are not inviolable.

For generations, the idea that modern European history began with the Renaissance and the Reformation concealed the fact that both these movements had important anticipations in the Middle Ages; and more serious still, the idea that modern history was a unity led historians to detect in the past all kinds of deceptive resemblances to their own day. Though he is usually less acutely aware of it, the general historian has a similar problem in deciding the geographical limits of his study. The historian of Europe, for example, has to contend with the fact that his field of study has no natural frontiers in the East. It is a cultural as well as a geographical concept, and its cultural limits fluctuate continually.

The case, therefore, for the science of historiography, or in other words the study of the divisions of history, is strong. Dr. Halecki's latest contribution to it reaches the provocative conclusions that European history is a unity falling into two, not three, distinguishable phases, and that it is now over. His objection to the phrase 'ancient history' is simply that the events which it is generally taken to cover occurred either outside Europe or on a narrow fringe of the Continent. Europe proper began with what is conventionally known as the Middle Ages, passed through a transition far slower and less clear-cut than is commonly supposed into modernity, began almost at once to disintegrate and has now completed the process. It is no longer a cultural unit, since the East has been absorbed in a primarily Asiatic civilization and the West has become part of an Atlantic community.

In putting forward this thesis Dr. Halecki makes some acute criticisms of the work of other historiographers, mostly French and German, and gives some good illustrations of how the science can be used to support preconceived political conclusions. But the layman will be inclined to ask whether some measure of bias is not inseparable from the science itself, whether, indeed, historiography is in the proper meaning of the word a science at all. Dr. Halecki's own interpretation has for example the inevitable effect of raising what used to be known as the Middle Ages to pride of place in the whole of European history. The dominant characteristic of that period was, he says, universalism. Not only had Europe a common culture but that culture received visible and tangible expression in the institutions of the Papacy and Empire. He adds that the disintegration of Europe began when the Continent failed to unite against the Turks. Thus the seeds of decay were sown at the very beginning of the modern period, which instead of being a glorious consummation, as the Whigs conceived it, is relegated to something like the status of an appendix.

In a final chapter called 'The Basic Problems of European History', Dr. Halecki argues that the collapse of Europe is due to its failure to solve the problem of freedom, which he regards as the problem of providing scope for diversity within a framework of unity. The federal idea might have supplied a means of reconciliation, but when European internationalism was at its height in 1919 the Continent was too far advanced towards disruption to make it practicable.

All this tacitly implies that the natural or at least the ideal condition for any civilization is political union under common institutions, and this is a highly controversial assumption which history cannot be made to support. The object of historiography is to discover what are and what are not, in Professor Toynbee's phrase, 'intelligible fields of study'. What constitutes an intelligible field of study, however, will depend largely on what the historian wants to find out. If he is writing a history of German legal thought in the nineteenth century he will be

better advised to start his introductory chapters with the Middle Ages than with the eighteenth century. Every historian approaches the past from a particular standpoint and with the purpose, conscious or otherwise, of explaining something. It is this alone which provides him with a principle of selection. He must take his stand at a particular point in time, whether that point is in the period which he is studying or in his own generation, and the emphasis which he gives to the events he describes and the relations he sees between them must be determined largely by the point from which he is looking at them. All interpretations of the past are therefore relative and provisional.

It is particularly important that the historian of civilizations should remember that he is thus limited. A civilization is a body of assumptions about religion, morality and art, held in common by the inhabitants of a particular territory. It sometimes expands geographically at the cost of diminishing its intensity and its development is sporadic not continuous. It is none the less a valid and useful concept for the historian so long as he remembers that it is not a constant and measurable entity, that his own conception of what are the main divisions in its development is subjective and that it must be qualified not merely by the findings of detailed historical research but also by the views of later generations about what is important.

The past is irrevocable, but history, which is the interpretation of the past, is continually modified by the future. Sometimes a historian may say, with reasonable confidence, that a particular stage in the development of history has exhausted its influence and may be treated as a whole. Any book about contemporary history, however, which does not end with a dash and a question mark should be suspect. Dr. Halecki's assumption that European history is over may be right but it is not history.

T. E. UTLEY

FRENCH REVIEWS

FRENCH Reviews during the last quarter have been largely concerned with the Encyclical *Humani Generis*. Comments on the Dogma of the Assumption are not yet to hand, except in weeklies like *La France Catholique*. However, in the August-September number of *La Vie Spirituelle*, there was reproduced the Homily of St. Germain of Constantinople (d. 733) on *La Dormition de la Sainte Mère de Dieu*, showing the ancient belief in the doctrine both in East and West. The same number contained a study of *Le Mystère de la Vierge dans l'Art*, and an account of the Inter-American Congress on Sacred Music. The October issue of *La Vie Spirituelle* was devoted mainly to studies on the mystical and religious life. Fr. J. Guillet, S. J., contributed a study of the various manifestations of the activity of Satan in the Old Testament,

culminating in the revelation of his 'personality' by Christ in the New; this revelation serves to light up, *a posteriori*, the study of the history of the Chosen People. M. Carrouges had some hard comments on the style of hagiography, both in writing and in format of books, which lost nothing by not being exactly novel.

The October *Études* studied the Encyclical in some detail, pointing out that the tenour of the document was by no means purely negative, but not disguising that the strictures contained in it were certain to hit hard at certain current tendencies in some French Catholic circles. *La Nouvelle Revue Théologique* of the Catholic Faculties of Louvain (a Jesuit publication) also gave the text of the Encyclical, promising a series of detailed studies in forthcoming numbers. The leading article by Fr. Jean Levie, S.J., was substantially on the same lines as that in *Études*. This issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Théologique* also contained the Latin text (and French translation) of *Summi Maeroris*. The other contributions were of the usual scholarly quality which one associates with this Review, and were pleasingly divorced from the contemporary preoccupations which beset one in most other Reviews in French.

Études featured an article on the possibility of inter-planetary voyages by R. Richard-Foy, which was pleasingly unsensational. He considers that the journey to the Moon is indeed possible. 'It is very near; about 360,000 kilometres. At 10,000 kilometres an hour it would take thirty-six hours to reach—three times less than a journey by boat from Paris to New York. The journey is therefore devoid of difficulty but . . . the exploration is likely to be in difficult conditions without achieving very interesting results.' As for strictly inter-planetary travel: 'it is conditioned by a very great number of important discoveries which we cannot foresee . . . and cannot be achieved without enormous financial investments, much higher than present world resources'.

The second meeting of the Council of Europe was examined at some length both in *Études* and *La Vie Intellectuelle*. The tentative opinion in both was that, unless the second part of the Assembly's work, due to begin in November, is much more successful than the August session, the Council is doomed to the sterility which is so clearly the objective of the British Government, working in co-operation with all delegations which it can influence—such as the Scandinavians and the delegates from the British zone of Germany.

La Vie Intellectuelle announces that it is facing a crisis. If it does not obtain greatly increased support within the next twelve months it will have to close down. The August–September and the October issues had the usual strong sections on contemporary events, '*Les Signes du Temps*', in which one read with pleasure a vigorous note by Alfred Frisch on 'the Limits of Neutrality' in reply to the ostrichism of an article in the previous issue by Jacques Nantet. On the other hand one noted a thoroughly silly piece by Jacques Dumontier 'In praise of the Minis-

terial Crises'. Another weak and inept note was by P. Cheyron on the Schools question. The articles on the Korean situation have been sensible; and the October issue had excellent notes on the living-wage question.

One is less pleased with the main articles in both issues. In the August-September issue Ida Görres had a long study entitled *Défaitisme Chrétien* (translated from the February issue of *Wort und Wahrheit*) which, beginning with a quotation on St. Thérèse of Lisieux wrenched from its plain contextual meaning, was a long, unsubstantiated harangue against the Catholics of the late nineteenth century. It was unscholarly throughout; and its only basis that I know in French may have been M. Henri Guillemin's distorted *Histoire des Catholiques Français au 19e siècle*. The only conclusion one could draw from this article was that the tradition which produced St. Thérèse was obscurantist and bad for the Church. Why *La Vie Intellectuelle* bothered to translate it passes comprehension. Its thesis has received an abundant refutation in M. Havard de la Montagne's *Histoire de la Démocratie Chrétienne*. In the same issue M. Guillemin contributed a study, based on unpublished MSS., on *La Pensée Religieuse de Victor Hugo*. Students may doubt whether Victor Hugo is worth considering as a thinker on any subject; but, as even M. Guillemin points out, his qualifications as a student of religion are hardly even rudimentary. But M. Guillemin tranquilly devotes some sixteen pages to almost uncommented insults by Hugo on every aspect of Catholicism. In the October issue, the Editor, Fr. Maydicu, makes an effort to disengage the cause of Catholicism from the accessory elements which so many 'social Christians' emphasize, and points out that a true apostolate must reiterate the transcendent and mystical aspect of the Faith. Immediately afterwards M. Joseph Hours contributes a long article on *L'Europe à ne pas Faire* which is as un-constructive as its title indicates; one of his major fears appears to be that Europe might be reconstituted on the basis of Catholicism. His conclusion, which is contradicted by some passages in the body of his article, is not devoid of that sycophantic and unscholarly bias which disfigures much such writing. 'Europe . . . will show itself, doubtless, when it is achieved, as incarnating some great idea . . . It will be made for the good of the peoples and by their common effort . . . for every great success in the course of history is the work of the people.'

One turns with relief from this Review which does not seem able to decide where it stands, to the vigorous writing of *La France Catholique*, which deserves a much greater public than it has in this country. In issues thirteen, fourteen and fifteen there are repeated corrections of some of the peculiar divagations which are outlined elsewhere in this issue of THE DUBLIN REVIEW. There is a timely correction of Jacques Maritain's argument from analogy by the Editor, Fr. Lefevre, in issue thirteen, which explains some of the peculiar political viewpoints which

Maritain has espoused in recent years, and which were politely and authoritatively corrected 'in another place' on a famous occasion. Fr. A. Frank-Duquesne also has an interesting article on 'Ersatz Supernaturalism' in this issue. Professor Henri Rouvière contributes an authoritative piece to issue fourteen on 'The Origins of Matter and Life'. The most important article, to my mind, in issue fifteen, is an examination by Fr. Raymond Dulac, under the title *Faut-il Supprimer l'École Libre?* of the methods and conclusions of an inquiry run by the Review *Esprit* in its issue of March-April 1949. *Esprit's* questionnaire and conclusions tended to undermine the whole case for the French Catholic schools at a time when the Government, with the most grudging will possible, was being forced to consider some alleviation of the intolerable burden imposed on Catholic parents by the upkeep of these schools. The book reviews in *La Pensée Catholique* are also excellent and reliable. (The address is *La Pensée Catholique*, 13, Rue Mazarine, Paris.)

La France Catholique welcomes the proclamation of the dogma of the Assumption as a means of the pacification of the world, in its issue of 27 October. It also deals extensively with the question of the plight of the thousands of Frenchmen still imprisoned on charges of 'collaboration' and of the tens of thousands cut off from the national life by the sentence of 'national indignity'. This reference possibly appears out of place in this notice, but it is the most scandalous injustice in Western Europe, and it is good to see the most reliable of French Catholic weeklies insisting on the imperative need for justice, pointing out that France is the worst backslider in response to the Papal appeal at the beginning of the Holy Year for the ending of such political victimization. It must be added that the Catholic leaders of the M.R.P. have a very poor record in failing to espouse this cause effectively and *La France Catholique* deserves great praise for continuing to spur their consciences which appear to be too preoccupied with purely electoral considerations.

FRANK MACMILLAN

GERMAN REVIEWS

GERMAN Catholics are stocktaking. The third *Katholikentag* since the war, the seventy-fourth since the beginning, has been held at Passau; and not very far away the Passion Play has been revived at Oberammergau. But not only is it too early to speak of a return to normal, there are even questions being asked as to whether these events have not changed their character or even become wholly irrelevant to present needs.

A somewhat optimistic article in *Die Österreichische Furche* of 7 October, by Alois Mertes, on the prospects of German Catholicism, was followed on 14 October by a summary of the mistakes made at the *Katholikentage* based on an article by Fr. Galli, S.J., in the Swiss

Orientierung. He describes the great hopes roused by the Bochum *Katholikentag* of 1949 and the widespread disappointment when it was seen that Catholics were far from being united behind the proposals drawn up there for industrial self-government and other over-precise suggestions; he adds that the criticism, especially from higher ecclesiastical circles, was directed less against practical suggestions than to the theory behind them—but the force was already spent. At Passau this year it seemed wiser to accept the motto, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God', but unfortunately the fulfilment was less simple. Many devotional exercises side by side with numerous lectures restricted severely the time for serious work, and the work itself was ill-prepared. There was little attempt to grapple with the burning questions of the day and the formulas which emerged from the discussions were empty and irrelevant: re-armament, for instance, was never mentioned in the conference rooms; outside of them it was on everyone's lips. Fr. Galli also criticizes the excessive emotionalism and the irrational fervour of the crowds; even at a higher level, frequent solemn Masses and episcopal addresses rendered serious reflection and mature discussion far too difficult. It must be admitted, however; that the promoters of the *Katholikentag* at Passau were by no means complacent either about their aims or results. In *Michael* (the weekly of German Catholic youth, now published at Düsseldorf) Dr. Franz Hengsbach claimed that the aim of the Passau congress was precisely to recall men to that inner life without which the most apt and well-thought-out plans cannot bear fruit; and admitting the limited results attained, Gunthar Lehner wrote that the confirmed sense of unity with the persecuted Christians in the Russian zone and the clear admission of responsibility for the sufferings of the Jews in Hitler's Germany could be counted among the more valuable experiences of the *Katholikentag*.

On Oberammergau under the title, 'Serving God and the Customers', Erich Kuby writes in the October *Frankfurter Hefte*. On the whole, it seems that the players and the organizers have maintained the original spirit of the production and put the service of God first. The influx of visitors has been overwhelming and many of them spent generously—most of the Germans had to be careful and 'the poorest of the poor are naturally the English'—but the certain prospects of considerable profit through a repetition of the play next year did not prevail against the determination to observe strictly the three-hundred year-old vow: 'It is an *obligation*, not a permit to bring some hundreds of thousands of strangers to the village every ten years.' Still, when the tourists come, they have to be provided for; if there were not something like the present degree of commercialization, it could seem as if Oberammergau were inhospitable. The play goes on, and the truly marvellous feature of it is that in mid-twentieth century it so convincingly maintains its original character. It is a presentation of the

Passion, not as conceived by an artist, but simply as it happened: dramatically it would be sufficient for the Christ to wash two or three of the disciples' feet, at Oberammergau he goes to all twelve.

Earlier, in the August *Schweizer Rundschau*, J.L. had been more critical of the play itself. Worthily and impressively presented, it still failed to move him. That, he admits, was partly his own fault; but he insists that it was also due to the very varied audience and even to the form of the production. In 1633 it made a profound and permanent impression on the little community who witnessed it in the churchyard. But, today, 'can some thousands of people from all parts of the world with different languages and viewpoints—and furthermore, with cushions (to ease the long hours of sitting on hard wood) and acid drops, and some wearing beach-clothes—can these ever form a similar community?' Even the normal theatre rules were not observed; everyone went out as he felt inclined. But apart from this sort of behaviour, the form—which is part of the vow—is not calculated to strike our contemporaries. Should not our Lord, even presented as a stage-figure and with the closest attention to the details described in the Gospels, speak a language better understood by our modern heathens? The applause after the last scene was not simply the result of bad manners, it could only have been possible among people to whom the events and the discourses were no longer real.

It would not do for these pages to become a review of reviews of reviews, but *Herder-Korrespondenz* does succeed in amassing information from so many different sources that it is important to refer to it here—especially for the present state of Germany. In the September issue the statistics of German Catholicism given by a Dutch Franciscan were quoted and apparently considered more or less accurate. He thinks that 25 per cent of German Catholics no longer receive the sacraments; in the larger cities of the West practising Catholics, nominal Catholics and apostates each represent a third of the total number; in some cities with the oldest Catholic tradition—Cologne, for instance, or Düsseldorf—de-christianization is nearly as far advanced as in France. In the country, even if the figure of 80 per cent practising is accepted, outward conventional observances do not conceal the emptiness of the religious life; the rapidly decreasing number of vocations to the priesthood is a sign of the widespread materialism.

In the same issue of *Herder-Korrespondenz* there is a brief summary of the encyclical *Humani Generis*, together with a most interesting account of recent theological controversies touching on its subject-matter. Herder in Vienna has now published the encyclical with the Latin and German side by side, a most helpful proceeding with documents that are far more technical than is generally realized.

In the August *Hochland*, Dr. Johannes Messner appeals for a more convincing presentation of Catholic thought on the Natural Law.

Deeply versed in the study of the great theologians and philosophers, he has also had the opportunity of meeting Anglo-Saxon thinkers on their own ground and becoming acquainted with the trend of opinion here and in U.S.A. A more empirical approach to the subject would rouse interest outside Catholic circles, and the beginning of it can be found in St. Thomas—a clear line that was not pursued further only because the metaphysical outlook on human nature was then still unchallenged.

Hochland for October contains an illuminating article by Romano Guardini on Dante's treatment of thieves in the *Inferno*. That theft is often a mortal sin is well-known to us, but the painful and horrible transformations of these sinners as depicted by Dante seem to be quite out of proportion with the rest even of so lurid a picture. The point is, says Guardini, that the Middle Ages had a keen sense of property as an extension of the personality: a man's goods were not simply those he had been fortunate enough to acquire, they were there because they pertained to his state and dignity. The thief, having struck at the person, must suffer the transformation of his own being: losing first the externals, then the human form itself, degraded painfully to the form of a serpent and left finally uncertain of possessing or of being anything. There is far more in Dante than the lines themselves might immediately suggest, there is a wealth of knowledge latent there even beyond the riches which he consciously and deliberately expressed.

Walter Warnach writes in the October *Wort und Wahrheit* on the Dominican, Père Bruckberger. Born in 1907 of an Austrian father and French mother, he was ordained in 1934 and became secretary of the *Revue Thomiste* in 1937. He was greatly influenced by Bernanos at the time and shared his views on the Spanish war. After the fall of France, he continued to fight with the resistance movement and later became chaplain to the Free French forces, a position which enabled him to win esteem for the Church during a difficult period and to defend with conviction supposed collaborators. In 1943 he was engaged with Giradoux in film-making and in 1947 he founded (with Maritain, Marcel, Malraux and others) the review *Cheval de Troie*. This was short-lived and he left in 1948 for the Sahara to spend his time in quiet and continuous retreat, but he is now back in France with new plans. He has never been on the best of terms with higher ecclesiastical circles and naturally has won the hostility of the *bien-pensants*. His outstanding characteristic is a recognition that we cannot choose which moments are to be decisive and therefore must trust quite blindly in God, accepting our failures still as contributions to the attainment of the end to which He is directing us.

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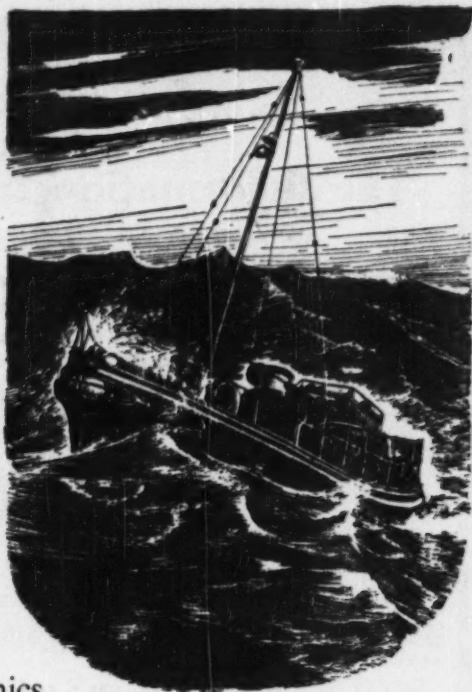
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